

Larson



Sorry for the Confusion

For many years I had a desire to begin one of my small collections with this short preface:

If one of my cartoons has brought joy and laughter to just one person, if I have been able to make just one person simply smile and forget their troubles for only a moment, then that one cartoon, clearly, was not worth drawing.

It was a joke, of course. Just a little bit of silliness. There was only one problem: I couldn't embrace this sentiment, even as a joke. It was at odds with the plain truth. I certainly never *knew* ahead of time that virtually no one would "get" a particular cartoon of mine, but if I had known, would it have killed my desire to draw it? Hard to say. One person getting it? That's tough. Two persons? I'm in.

On the other hand, I never got bogged down thinking too much about what was going on "out there." Really, a cartoonist is largely blind to reader reaction. This is the big wall that separates us from our distant and hairier cousin, the stand-up comedian. (I actually don't know if the "hairier" part is true; I'm guessing.)

Compare and contrast these two branches of the humoroid tree. For starters, we cartoonists are in ignorant bliss when we "bomb." We don't see the frozen faces or hear the collective groans or the universal "HUH?" that our little opus generated. For a comedian, however, bombing is a very public, very humiliating experience. I prefer ignorant bliss.

But the enviable side of this same coin is that comedians, perhaps at the price of such humiliating moments, are always learning from experience, throwing out jokes that didn't work, fine-tuning the ones that do. Small audiences become testing grounds for bigger audiences, and the comedians in turn are undoubtedly being shaped by the experience.

Cartoonists learn nothing from experience. There *is* no experience, really. At least none gained from "audience interaction." There *is* no audience. There's just an editor. And you, of course. There you are, probably sitting by yourself much like you are at this moment, reading your local newspaper or some other cartoon-accessorized publication. Maybe you're at home, sitting at the kitchen table, or on a bus, or in a diner, or on a park bench, or in a waiting room, or a prison cell. (I'm not joking; over my career, I've gotten more than a few fan letters from inmates, which won't surprise my detractors.)

In essence, I like to imagine you're as alone reading one of my cartoons as I was when I drew it. It's the only way I could bear it, I think. No "audience"—just you. Alone. Like me. (Now we're all depressed.)

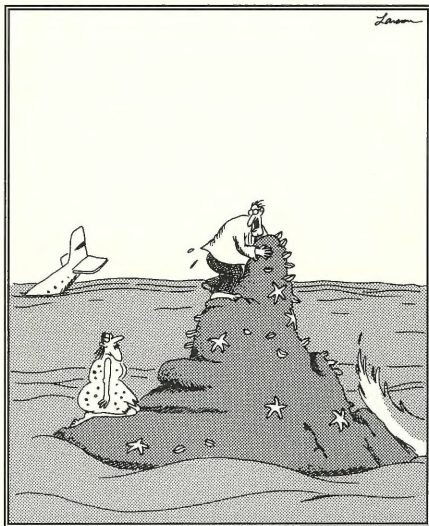
If cartoonists do improve as the months and years go by, it's only because we're evolving from within, exploring ourselves, our characters. (There's editorial feedback, of course, but mostly at the beginning; after you've moved from your learner's permit to your license, editors make friendly, calm suggestions as you head down the road. It's only once in a while that they will actually scream and lunge for the wheel.) And there's one other evolution: We simply *draw* better

with time. My first cow would have made a bad cave painting; my last cow was up there with the best Neanderthal artist you could throw at me.

Actually, I think cartoonists have more in common with writers than we do with comedians. The following writer-cartoonist parallels come to mind: loners, quiet room, favorite chair, hand puppet (just me?), and our trusty writing/drawing tools. But there is also one huge difference: If *we* blow it, we lose a day. If a writer blows it, he or she loses, what—a year? Two years? Personally, I prefer a job where I might screw up my day, not my year. (I envision most writers finally finishing a body of work, shipping it off to their publisher, and then going out that evening to a five-star restaurant and having a great meal and a bottle of vintage wine; cartoonists finish a body of work, ship it off to their publisher, and fix themselves a really big bowl of their favorite cereal. It all equates.)

So how does a confusing cartoon even come into being? It's easy. Since I'm "audience free," I just go where my mind takes me. Then my editor sees it, says to himself, "Oh, well—I've seen him do stranger things," and off it goes to your local newspaper, where you finally see it and go, "Huh?" Meanwhile, I'm back home having cereal.

For show 'n' tell, I've found a cartoon (oh, the choices) of what, in hindsight, I concede was just a little too cumbersome and obtuse. (Of course, the King of



"Well, we'll never want for food, Doris. ... This rock is absolutely encrusted with oysters and mussels—all the way to the top!"

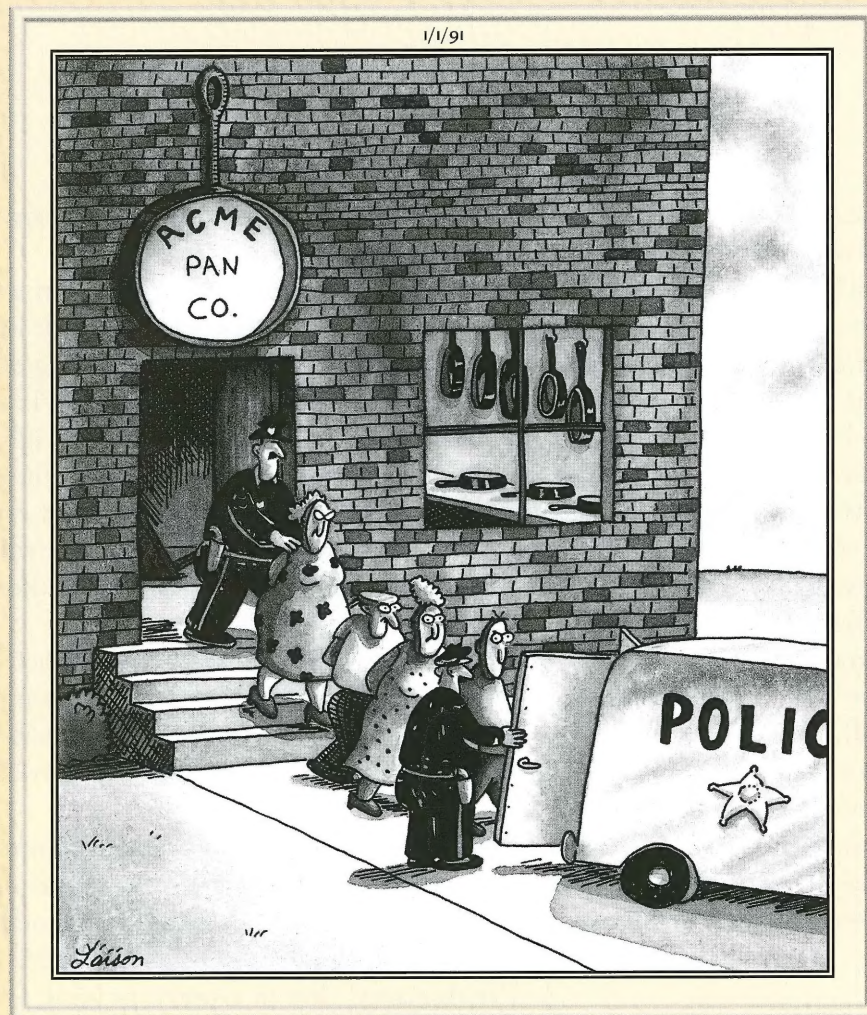
My Cartoons That Confused Everybody was one entitled "Cow tools" [Vol. 1, p. 251], but I've discussed that in a previous book and prefer not to once again relive my day in hell when that little gem was published.)

Let me be the first to acknowledge that even if you were to understand this thing, it's not exactly going to send you into gales of laughter. (Let's just call it "quiet humor," okay?) Here's the cartoon decoded: If you've managed to escape some disastrous event at sea, and then found safety on a small rock island, you would be well-advised to note where the various crustaceans and mollusks are making their little homes. Because "home" to those creatures is anywhere that is comfortably *below* high tide. (I knew I was in trouble when

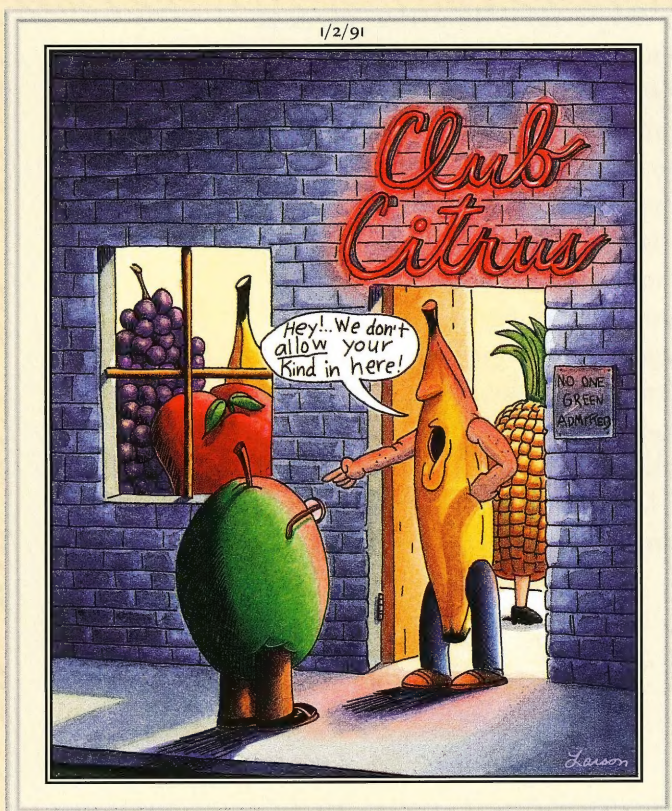
a marine biologist friend called me and asked me to explain this one.)

Even now, years after my retirement, I'm reminded of my reputation as The Great Confuser. One afternoon not long ago, a repair guy was at our house, trying to fix a problem with our electrical system. He tracked me down in the kitchen and started to explain to me in technical jargon what was wrong. I didn't have a clue what he was talking about, and at the end of his discourse I just looked at him and said, "Sorry, I'm confused." I didn't think he knew anything about me, but he suddenly narrowed his eyes and replied in an even tone, "Just consider it payback."

Fair enough.



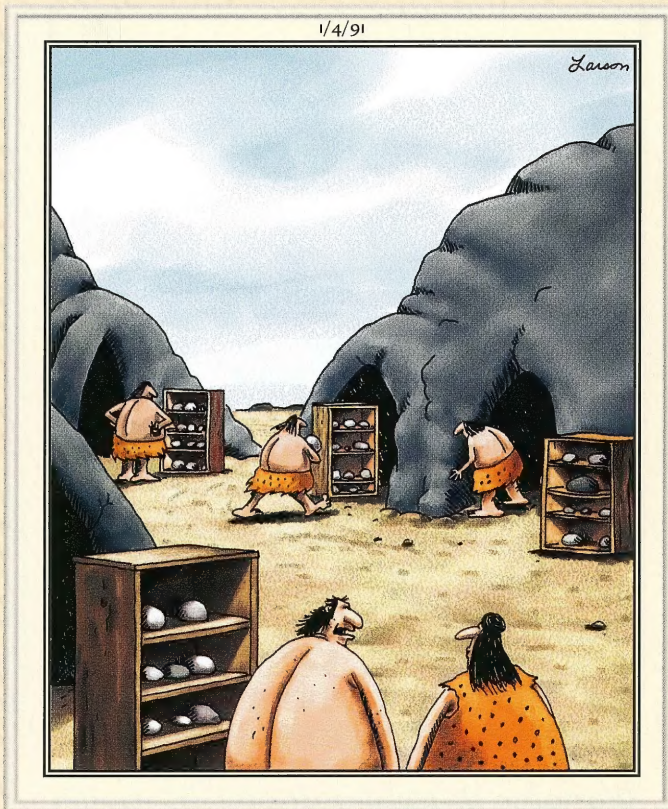
It was over. But before the police could arrive, the rioting employees had already turned on one another, using the closest weapons at hand.



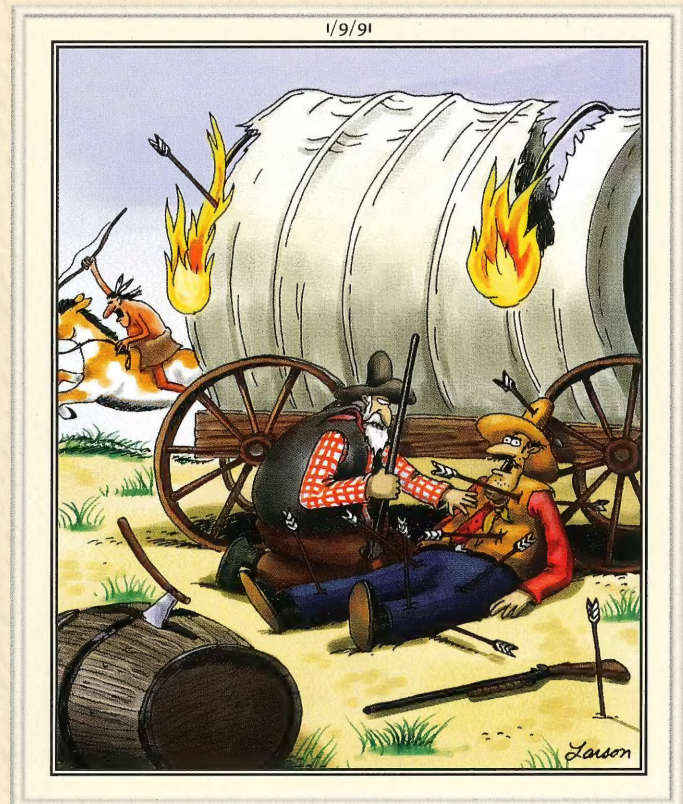
Forbidden fruit



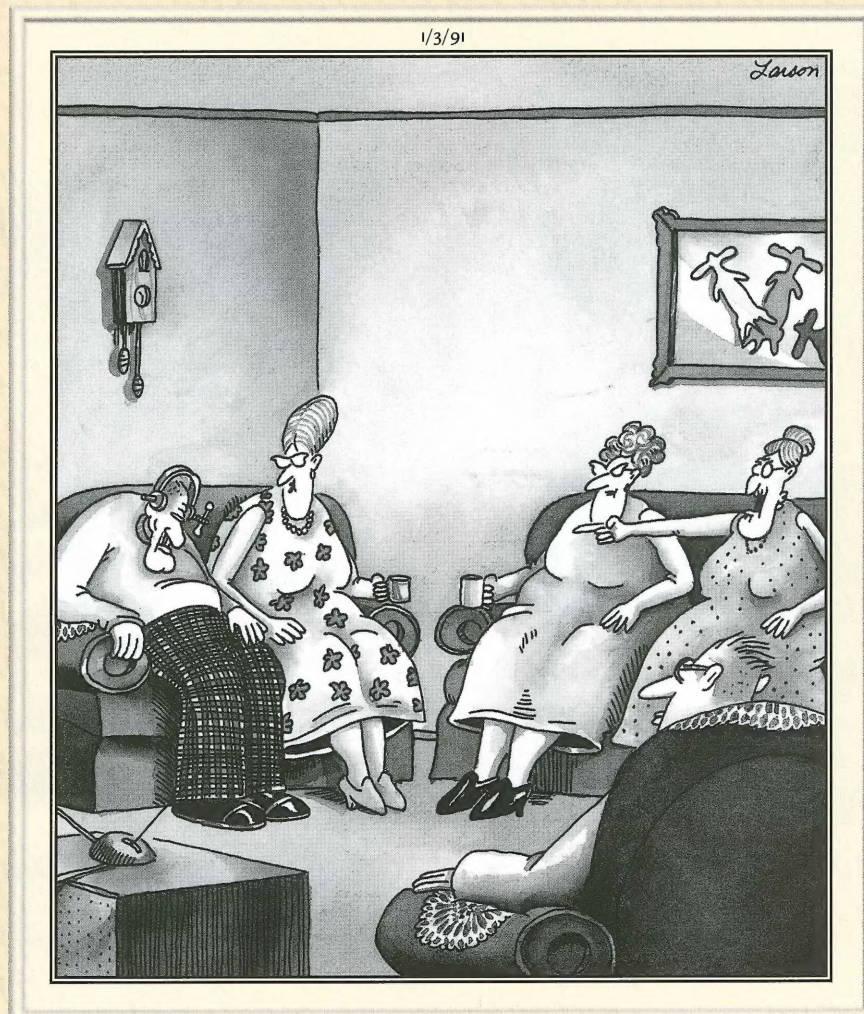
"Mayday! Mayday! This is Flight 97! I'm in trouble! ... My second engine's on fire, my landing gear's jammed, and my worthless copilot's frozen!"



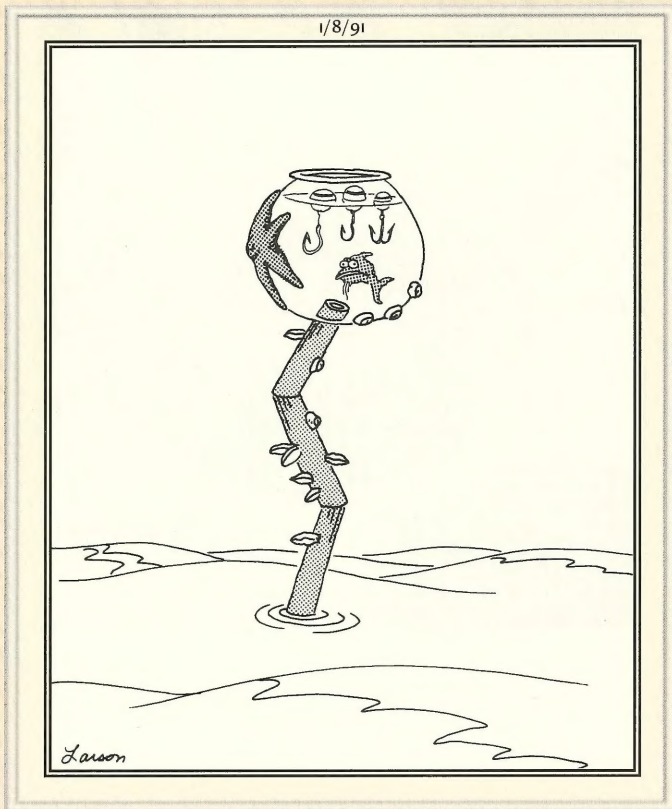
"You know, I used to like this hobby. ...
But shoot! Seems like *everybody's* got
a rock collection."



"Yeah, Clem, I hurt. But y'know, it's a
good kind of hurt."



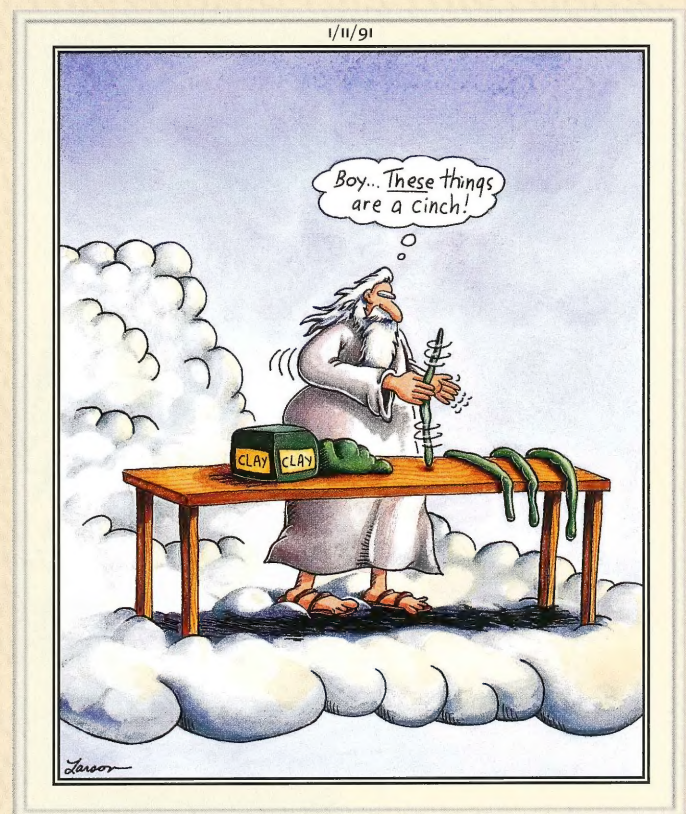
"Oh, for the love of—there goes Henry! ... Rita, you're closest
to him—give that c-clamp 'bout a quarter turn, will ya?"



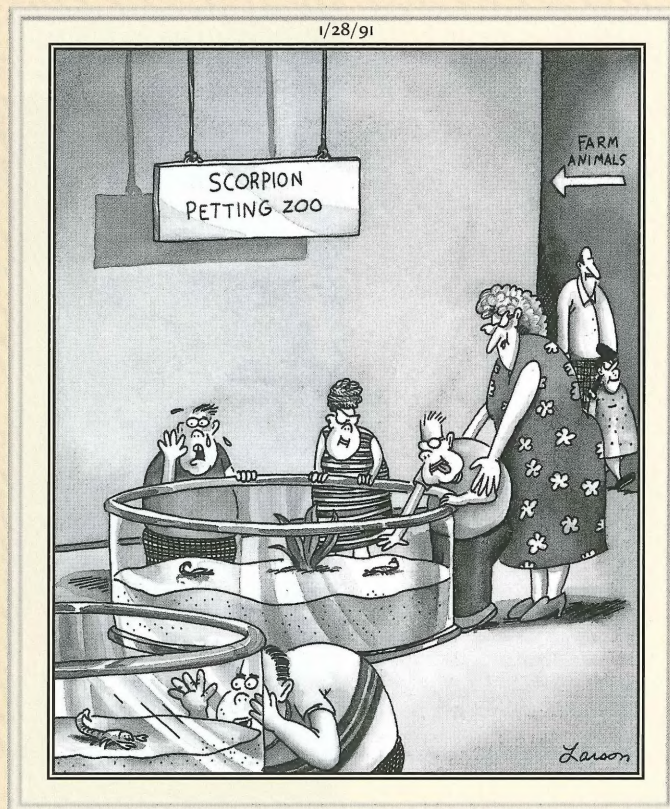
Fish dungeons



"Well, we'll never want for food, Doris. ...
This rock is absolutely encrusted with oysters
and mussels—all the way to the top!"



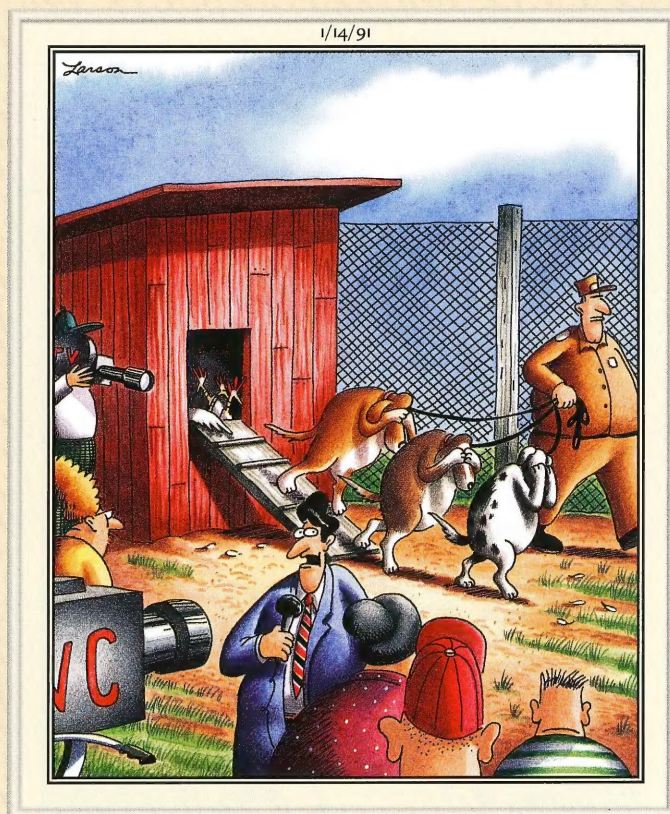
God makes the snake.



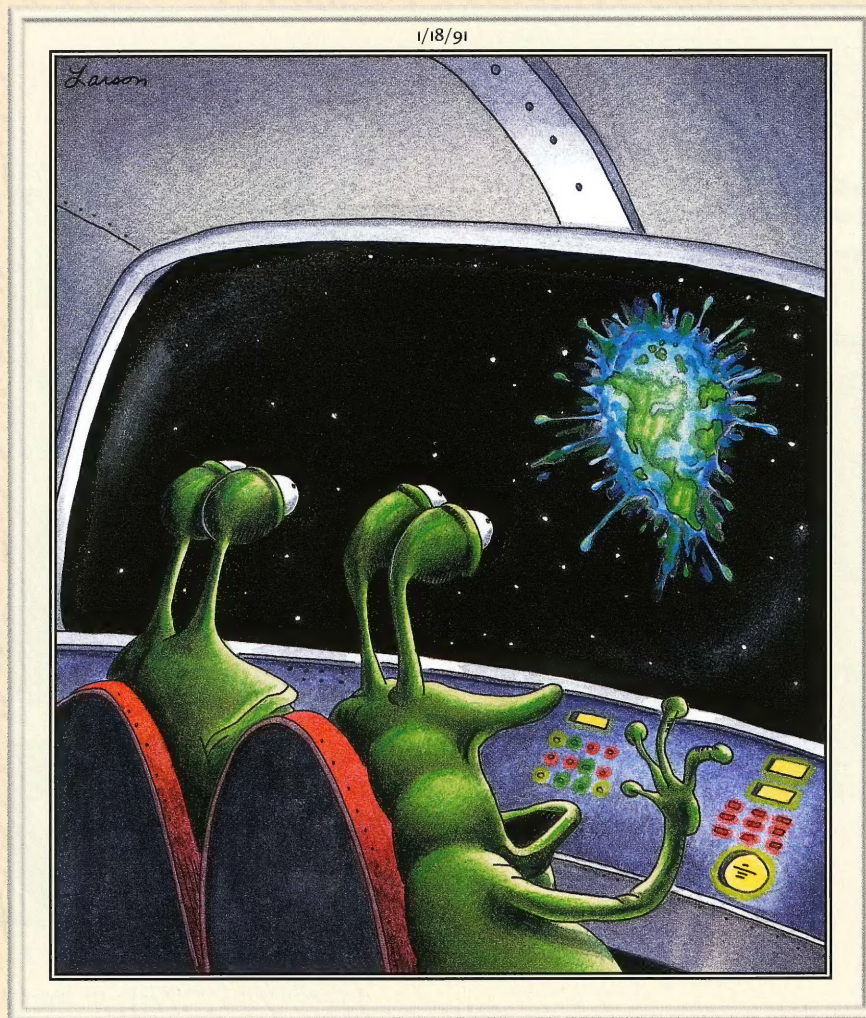
Innovative concepts in exposing city kids to nature



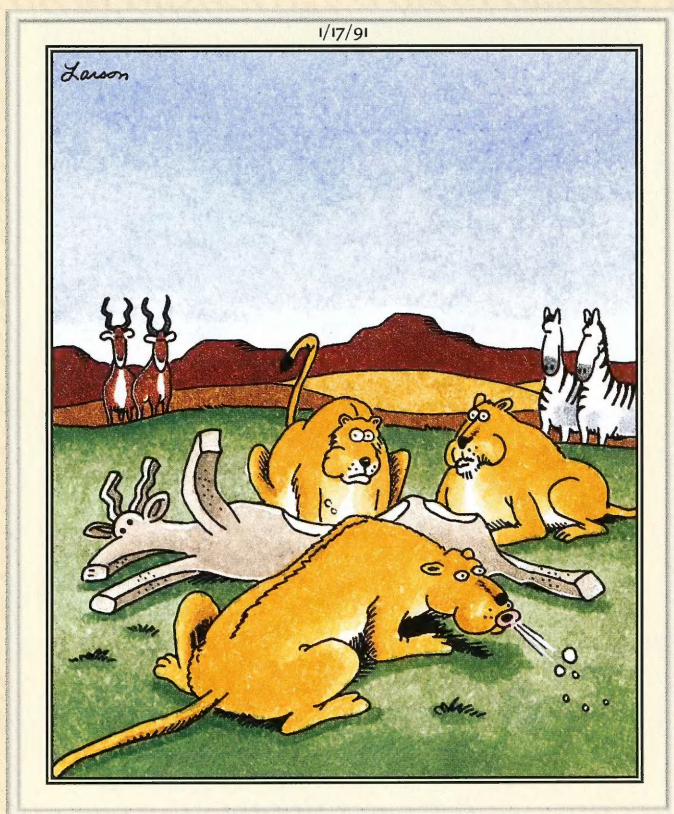
Primitive UFOs



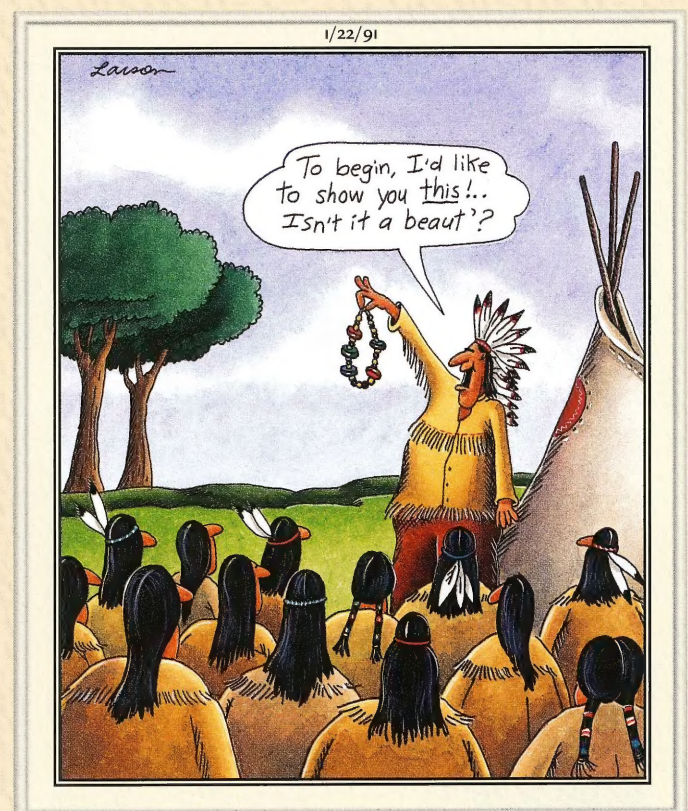
"The carnage out here is terrible, Sandy—feathers everywhere you ... Oh, here we go! The Animal Control Officer is leading the so-called Chicken Coop Three away at this very moment."



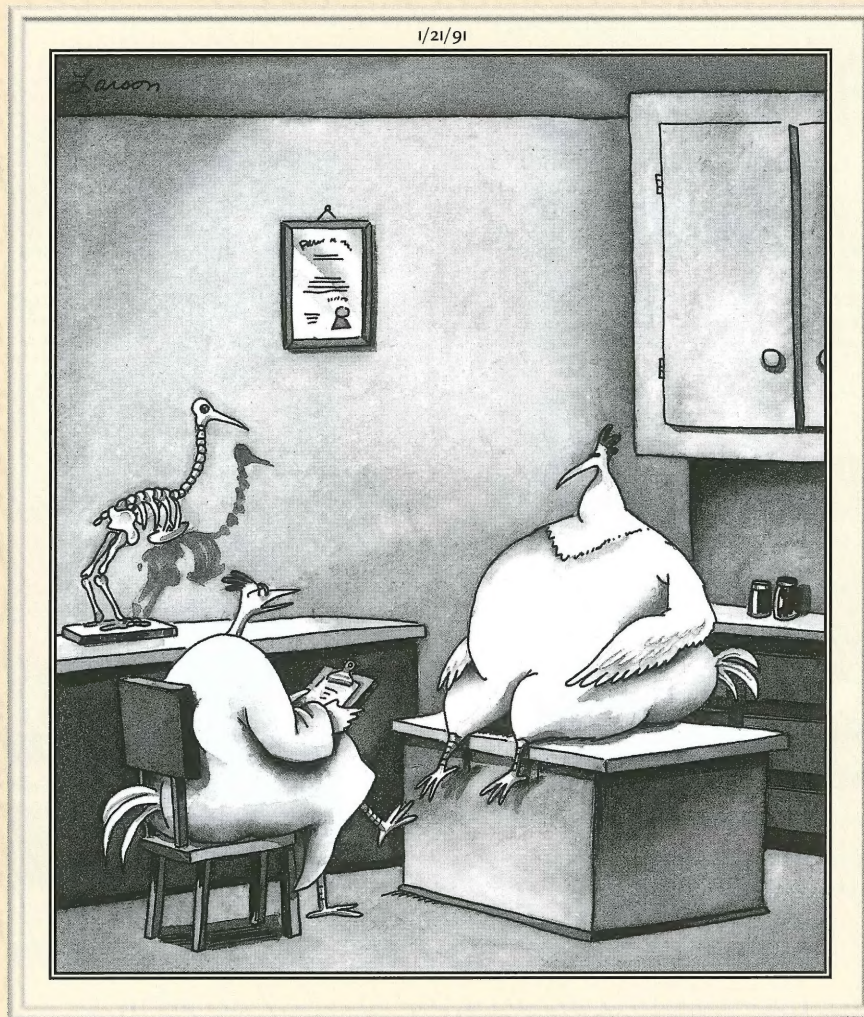
"Oh, gross!"



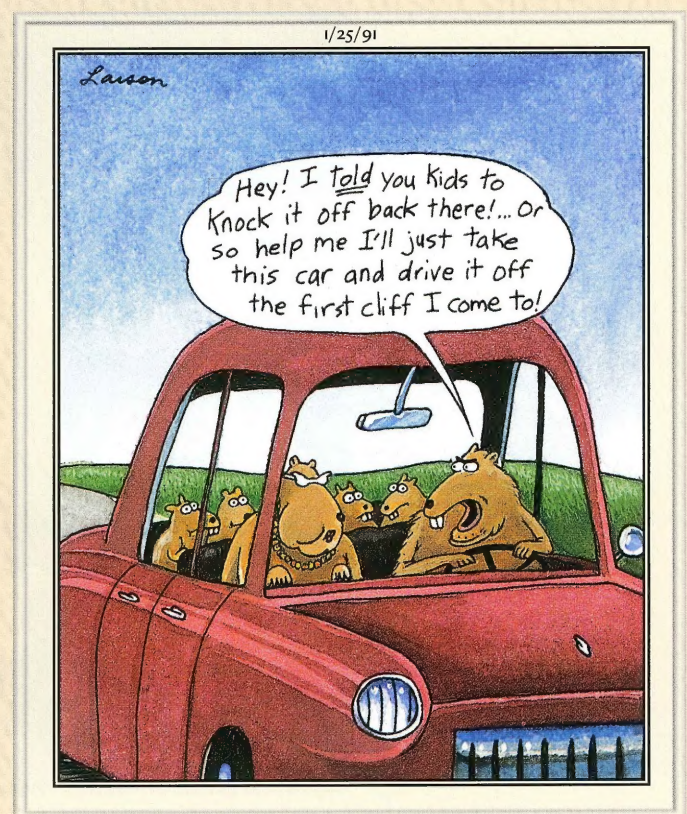
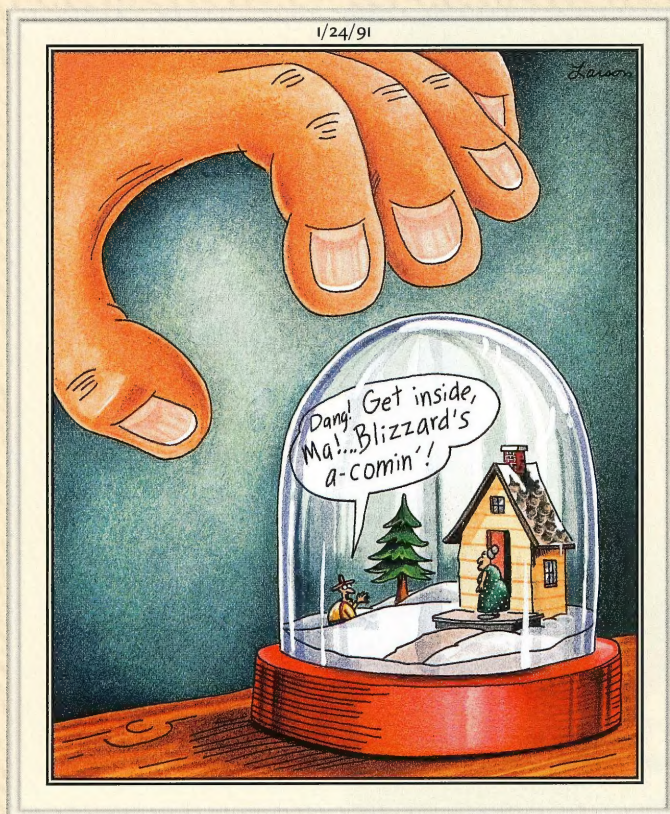
In sudden disgust, the three lionesses realized they had killed a tofudebeest—one of the Serengeti's obnoxious health antelopes.



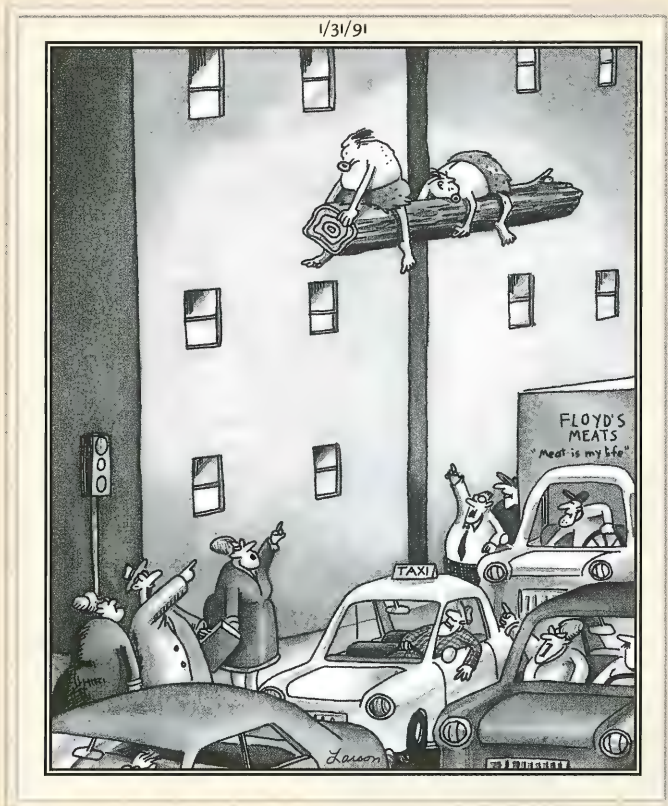
New York, 1626: Chief of the Manhattan Indians addresses his tribe for the last time.



"I'm afraid it's bad news, Mr. Griswold. ... The lab results indicate your body cavity is stuffed with a tasty, breadlike substance."



Lemmings on vacation



Hooting excitedly, primitive scientists Thak and Gork try out their new "Time Log."



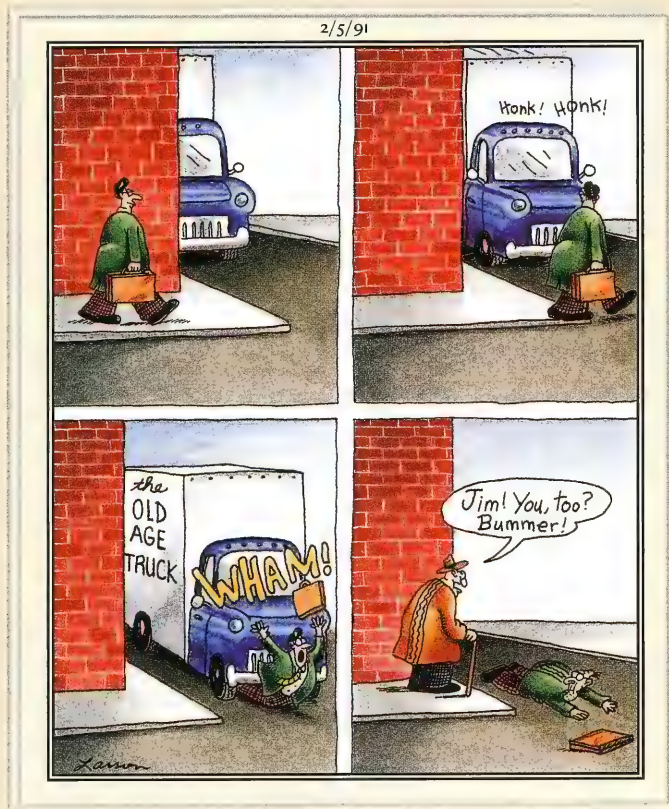
The growing field of animal liposuction



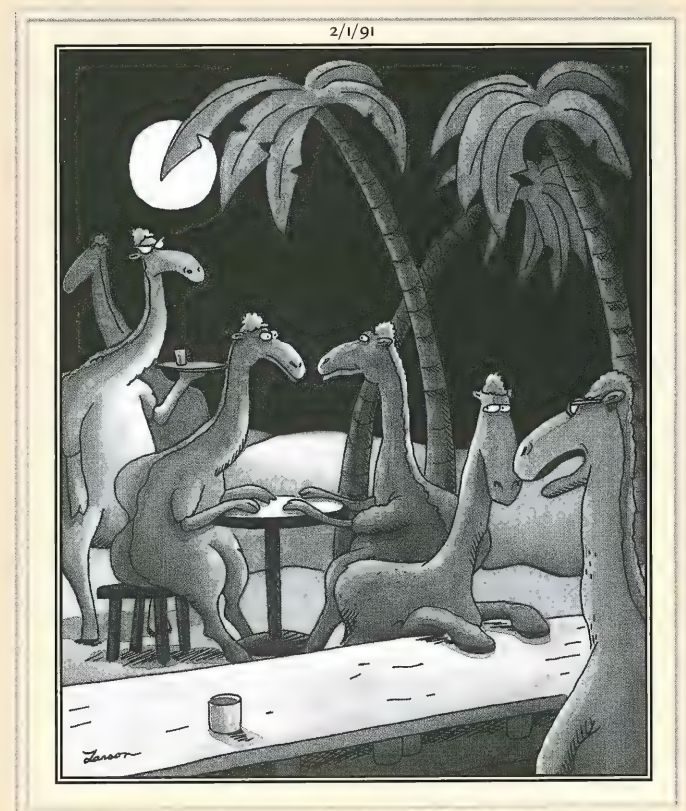
Although history has long forgotten them, Lambini & Sons are generally credited with the Sistine Chapel floor.



Cattle drive quartets



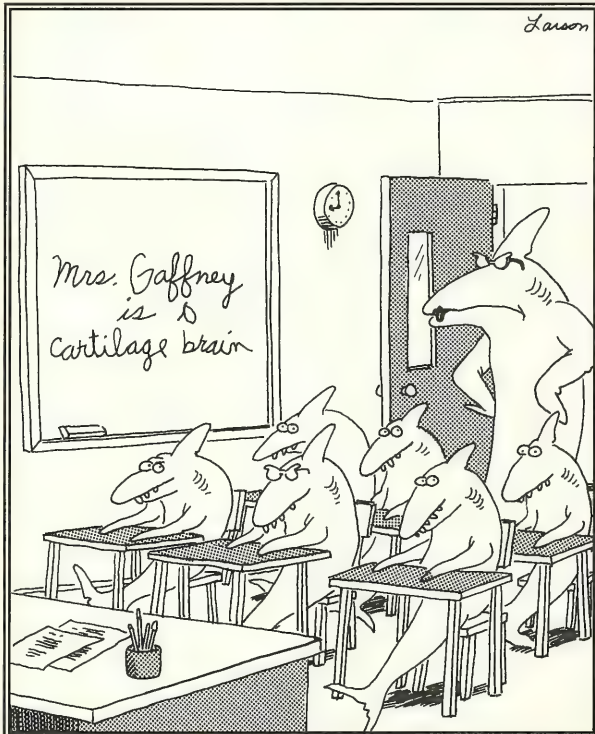
You never see it coming.



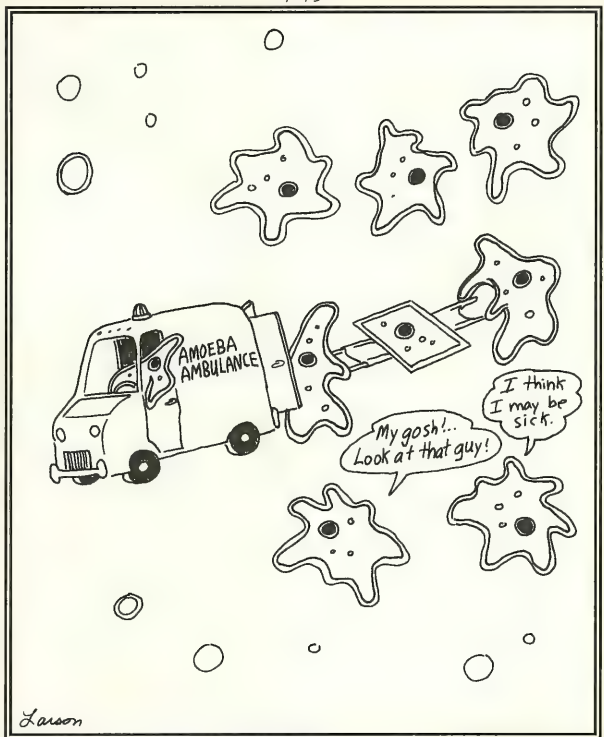
"Look at those two macho idiots. ... They haven't taken a drink in days—just to see which one ends up under the table."

2/4/91

Larson



2/6/91



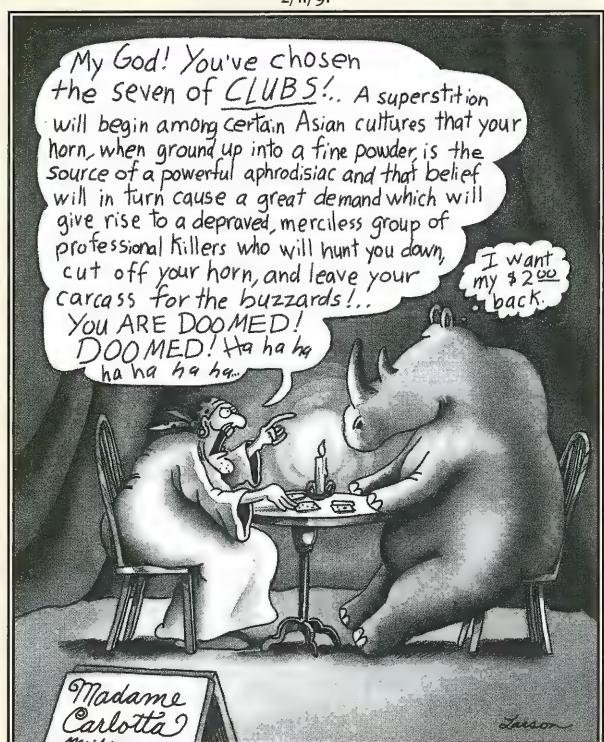
2/8/91

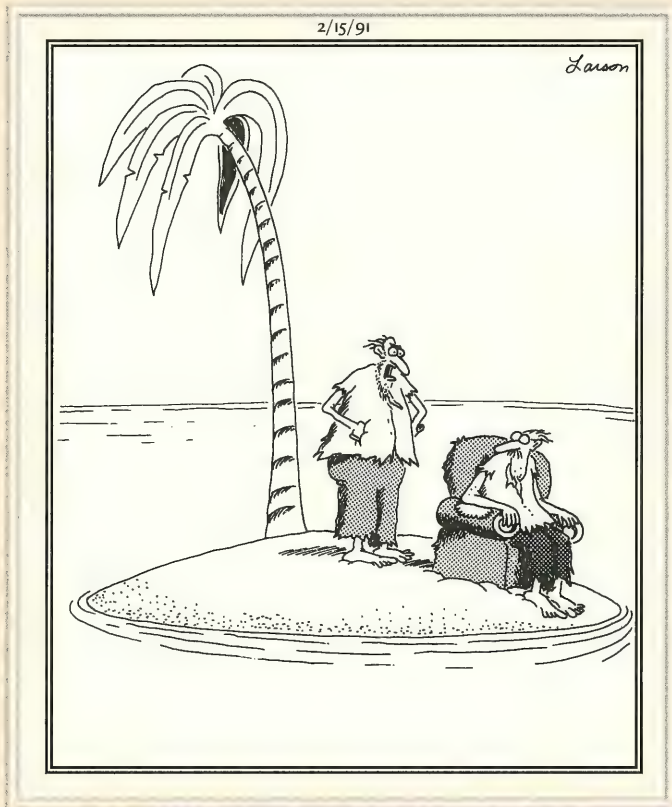
Larson



"Oh, my! Cindy! This looks exquisite! ... And look, Frank—it even has a cheeseball stuffed in its mouth!"

2/11/91

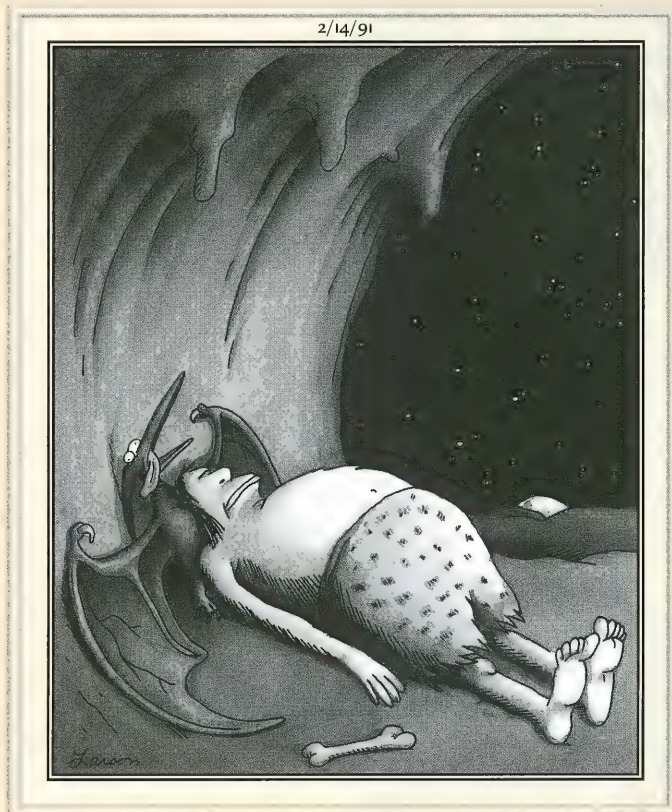




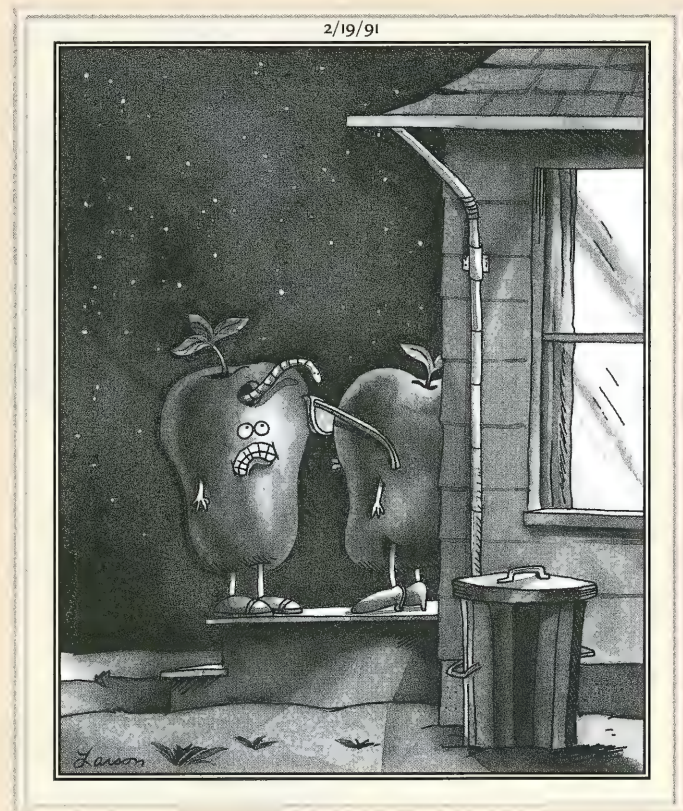
"Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! ... You're in my favorite chair again, Carl."



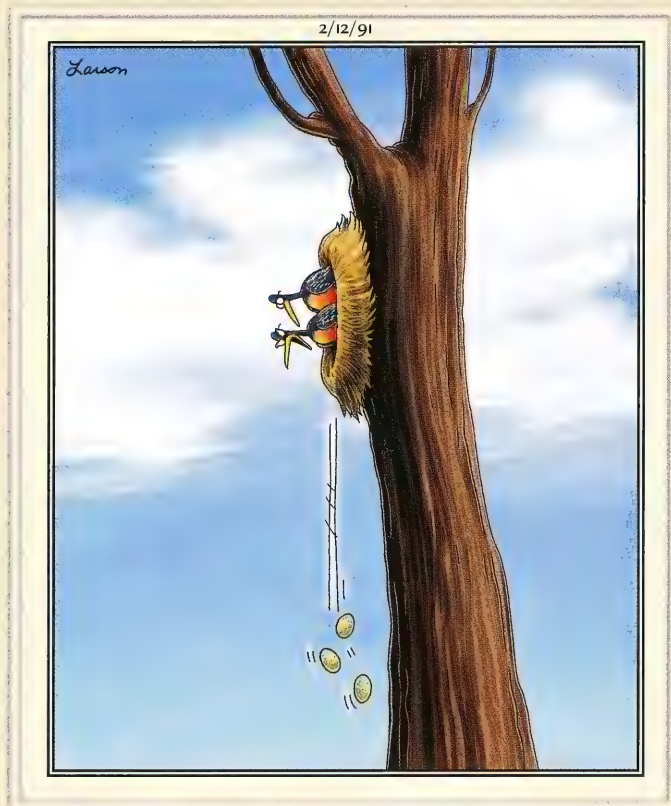
The birth of head-hunting



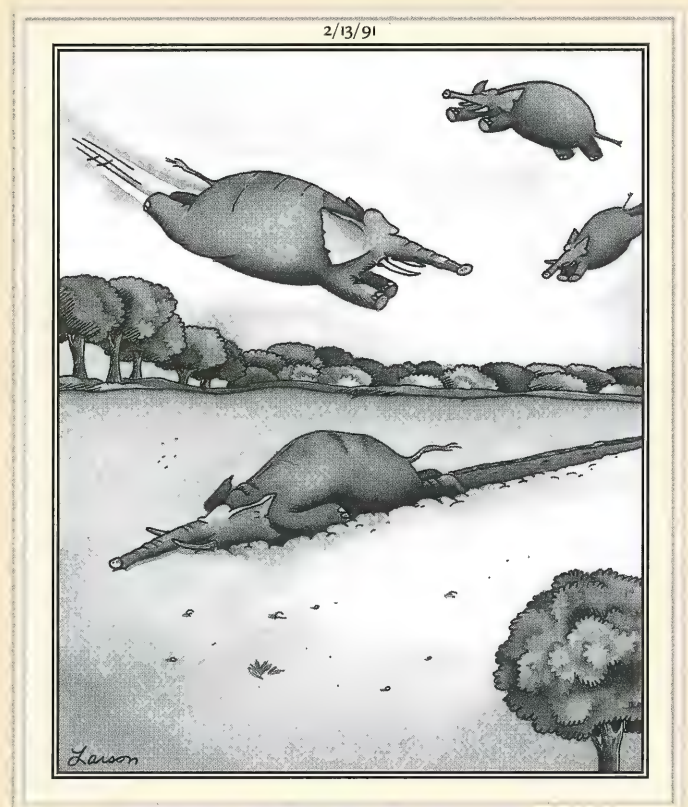
In the days before feathers



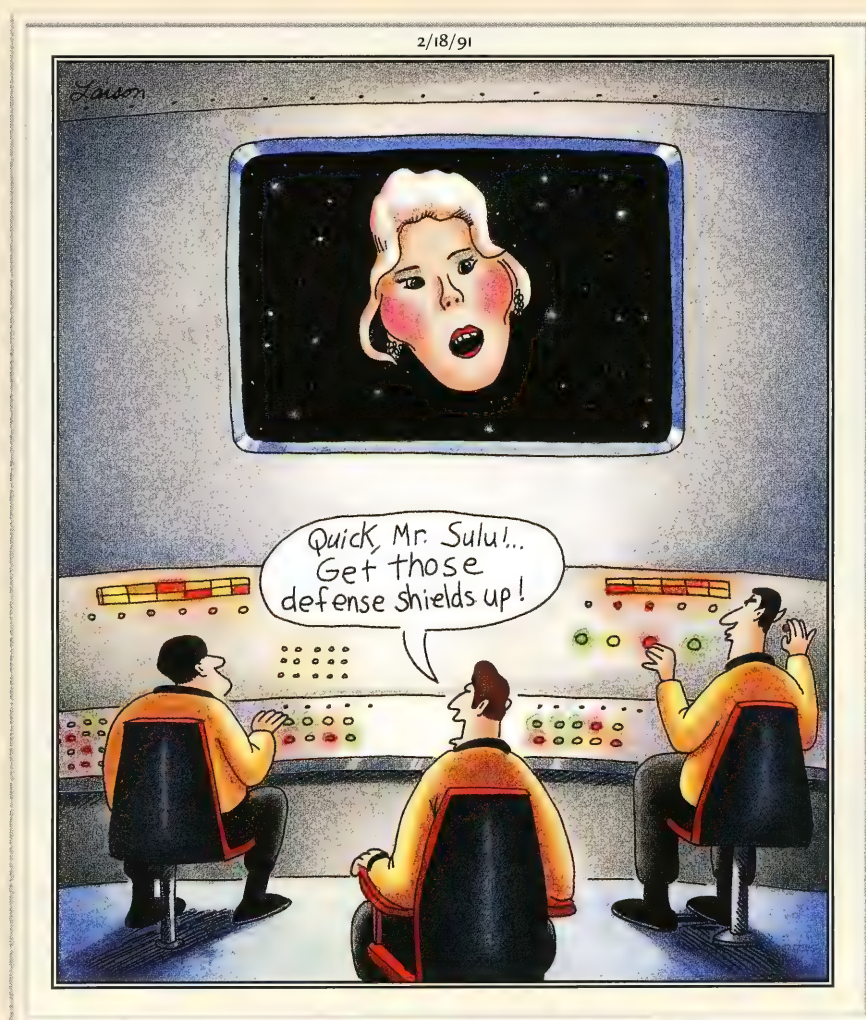
Andy looked up in horror. Right in front of Sally, a worm was emerging from his forehead—and he felt himself turning even redder.



"Aaaaaaa! There goes another batch of eggs, Frank! ... No wonder this nest was such a deal."

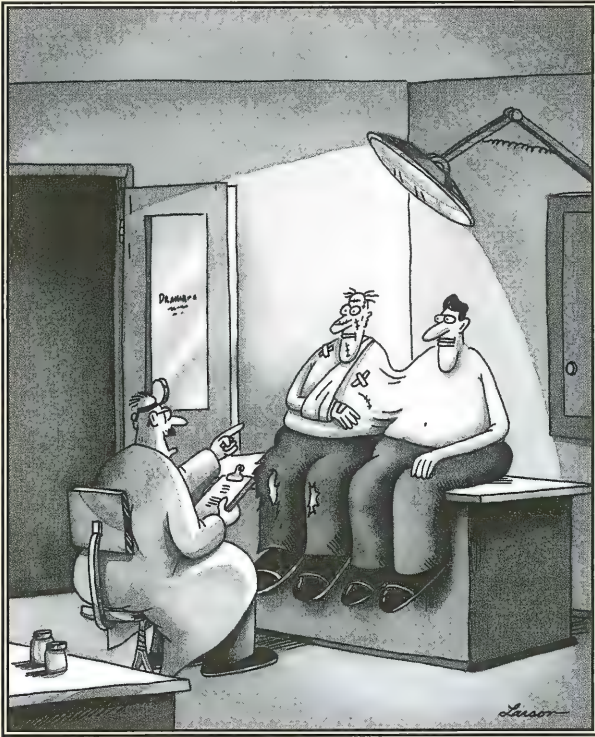


The Secret Elephant Aerial Grounds



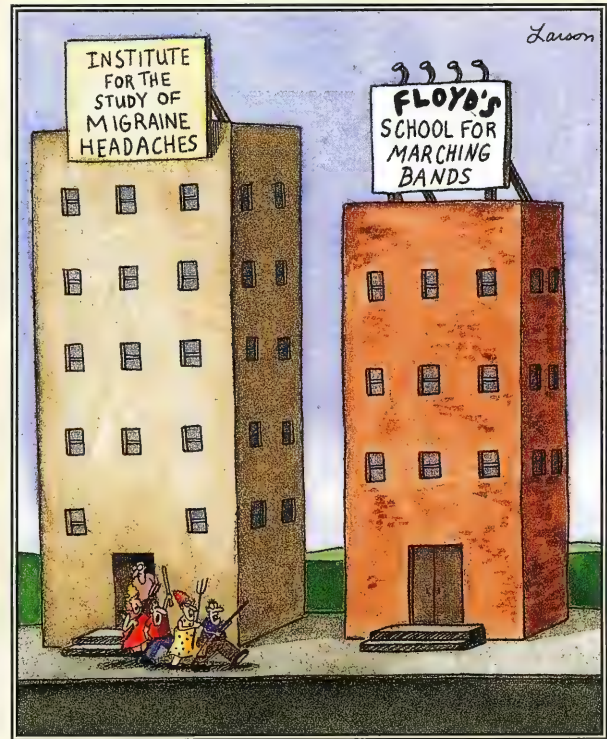
The crew of the *Starship Enterprise* encounters the floating head of Zsa Zsa Gabor.

2/25/91



"Wait, wait, wait—I'm confused. ... Bob, you're the one who's claiming your Siamese twin, Frank, changes into a werewolf every full moon?"

2/21/91



The dam bursts.

2/26/91



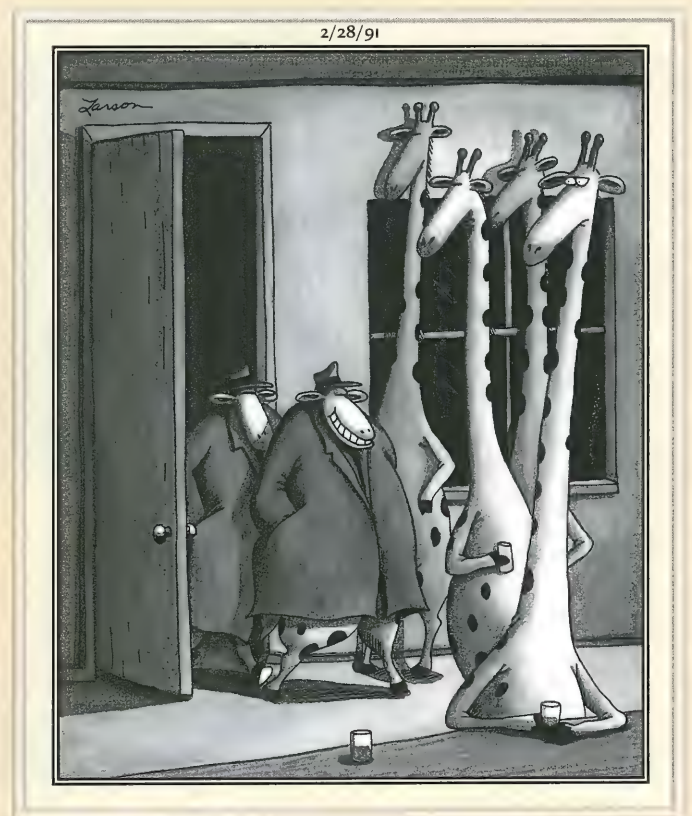
"Make a note of this, Muldoon. ... The wounds seem to be caused by bird shot ... big bird shot."



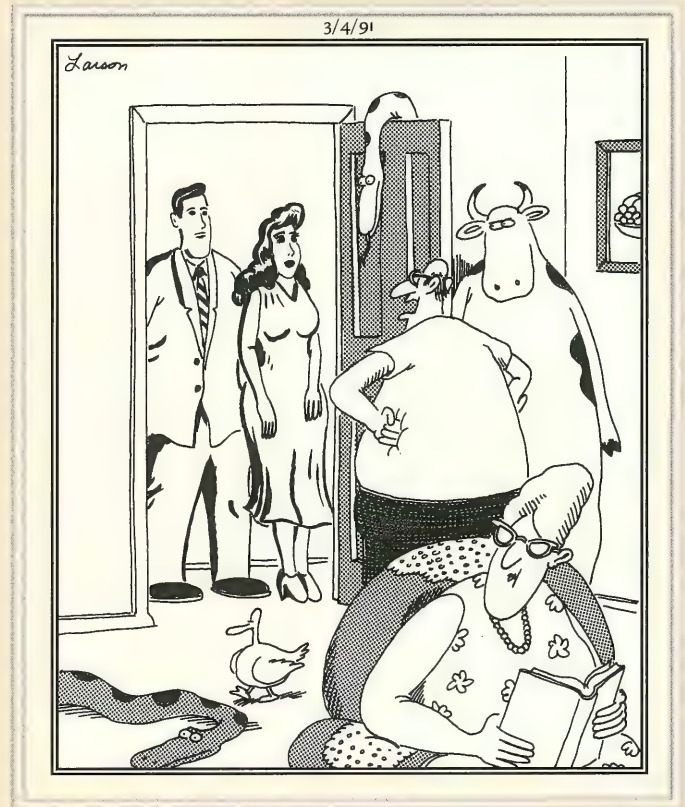
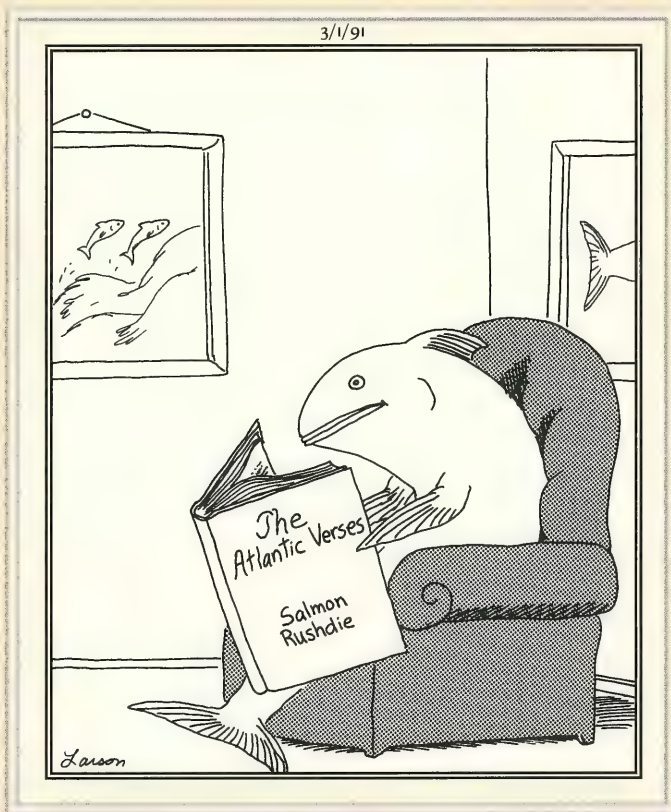
"Okay, ma'am—it's dead. In the future, however, it's always a good idea to check your shoe each time you and the kids return home."



Famous patrons of Chez Rotting Carcass



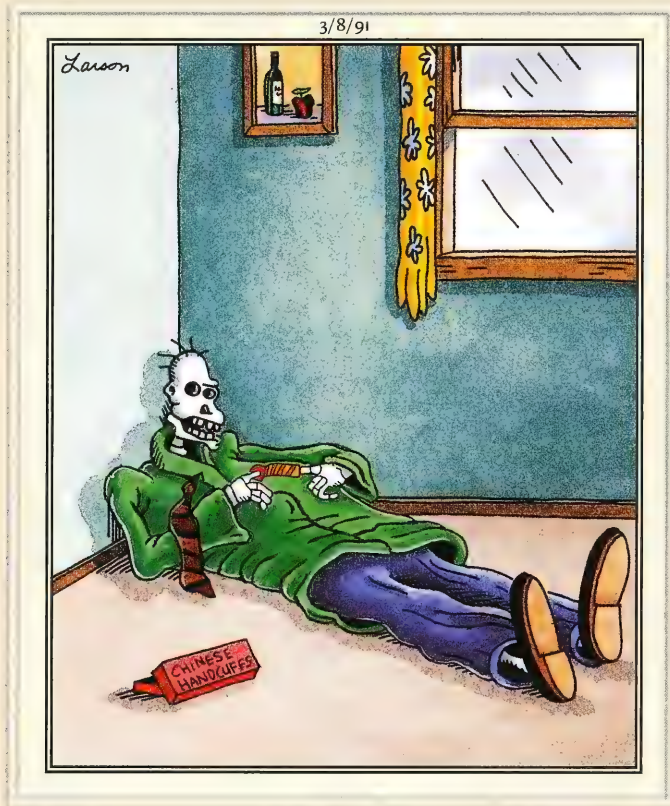
Giraffe thugs



"Oh, man! You must be looking for Apartment 3-G, Mary Worth, or one of those serious-type cartoons."



"Don't worry, Jimmy—they're just actors ... and that's not real ketchup."



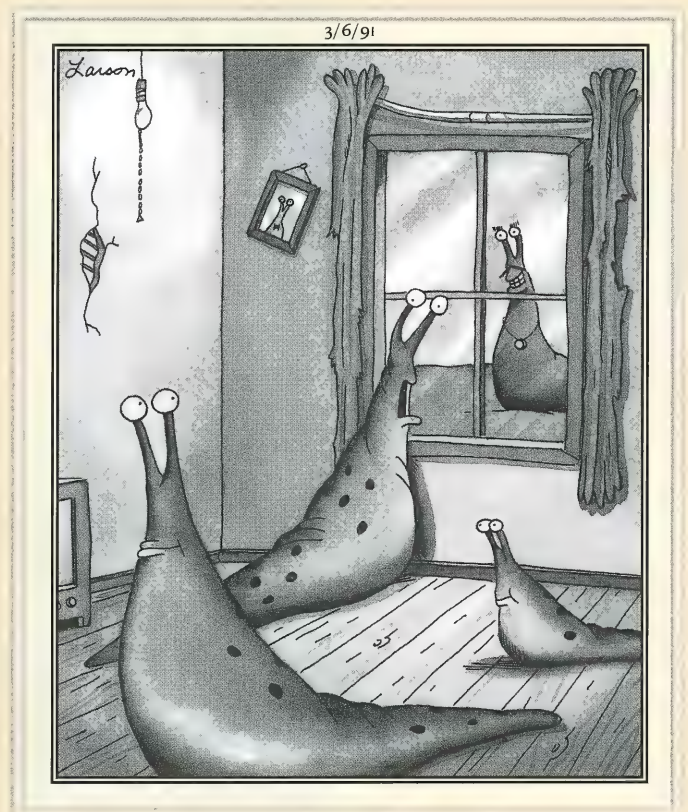
Houdini's final undoing



"Ticks, fleas ... ticks, fleas ... "

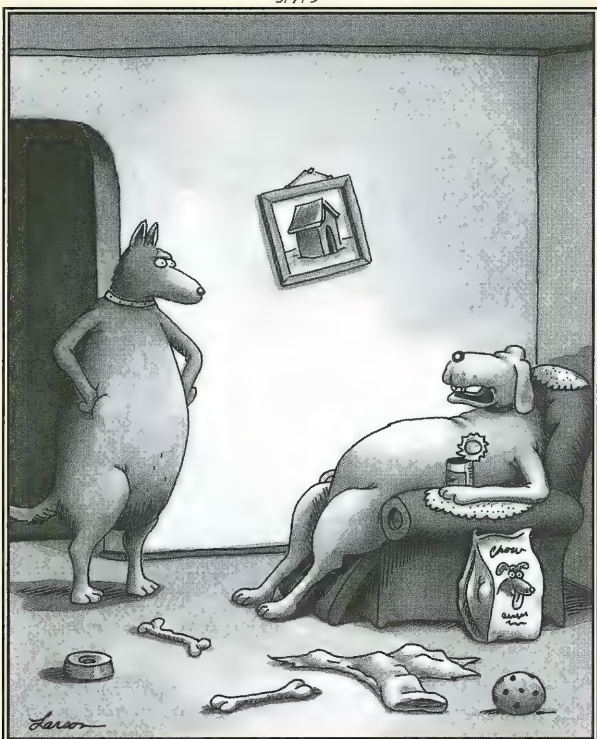


"You just take your prey, slip 'em into the flex-o-tube, flip the switch, and the Mr. Coils o' Death takes over."



"Uh-oh, Lenny ... it's the slimelord."

3/7/91



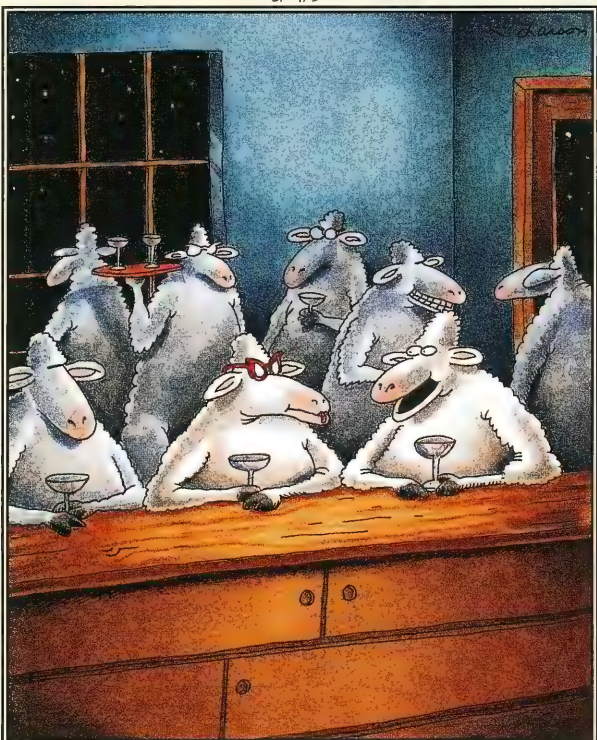
"Hey, look ... you knew when you married me that I was a nonworking breed."

3/13/91



"Listen, Morrison! ... Oh, wait. It's okay—those are jungle triangles!"

3/14/91



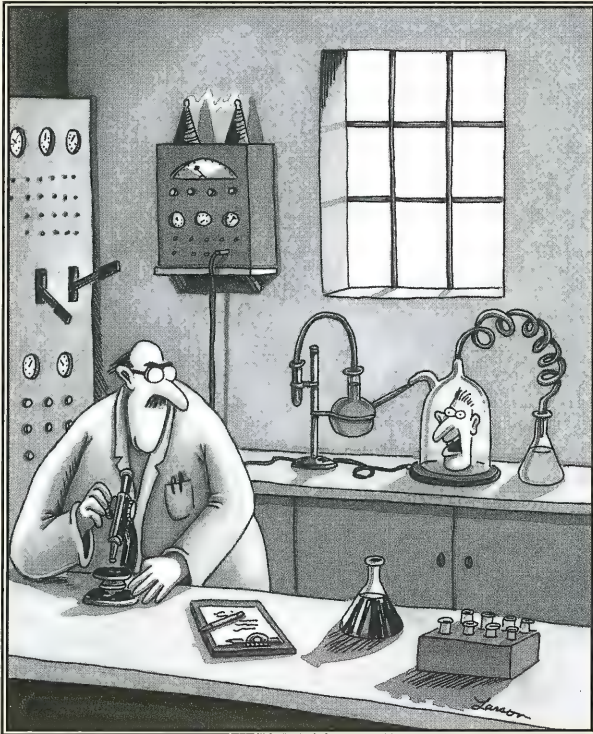
"Well, what d'ya know! ... I'm a follower, too!"

3/15/91



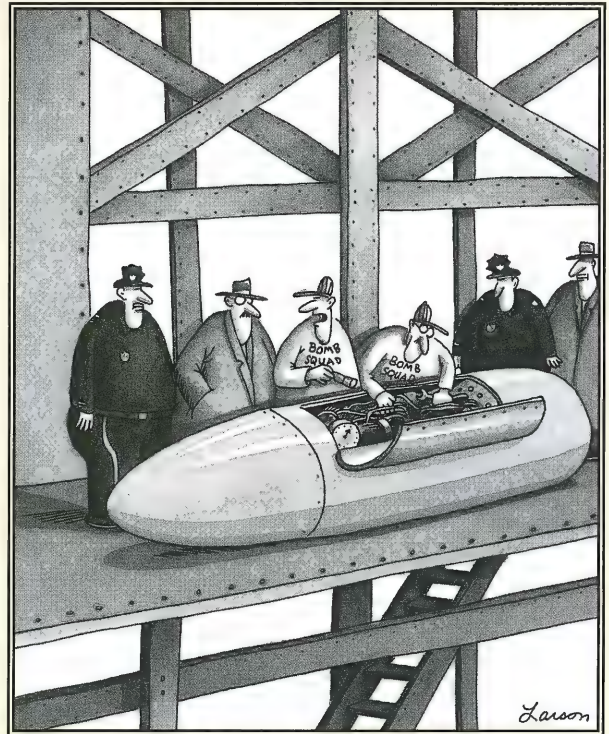
Shoot!.. Sounds like little kids approaching...Well, no rest for the wicked.

3/19/91



"Oh, professor ... did I tell you I had another out-of-head experience last night?"

3/27/91



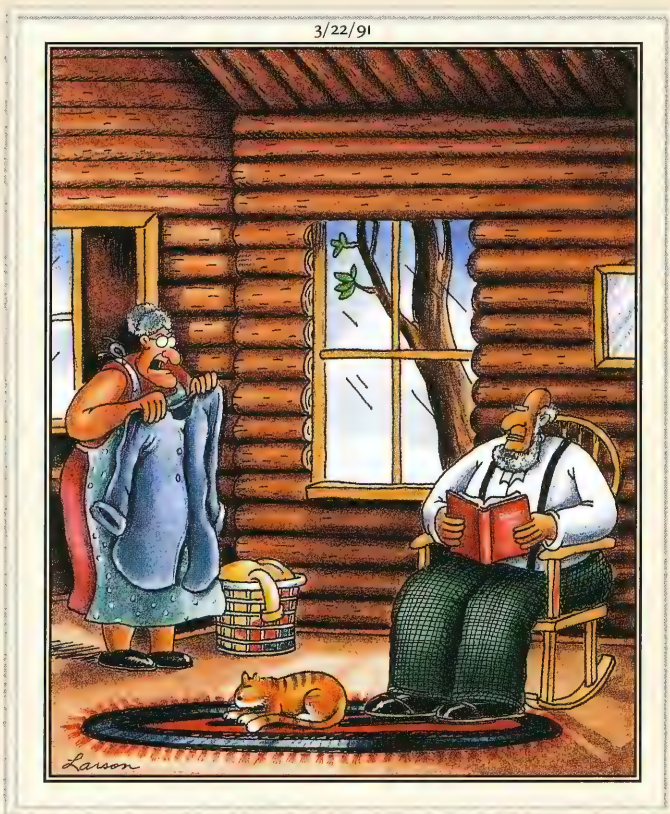
"Well, it's a delicate situation, sir. ... Sophisticated firing system, hair-trigger mechanisms, and Bob's wife just left him last night, so you know his head's not into this."

3/18/91





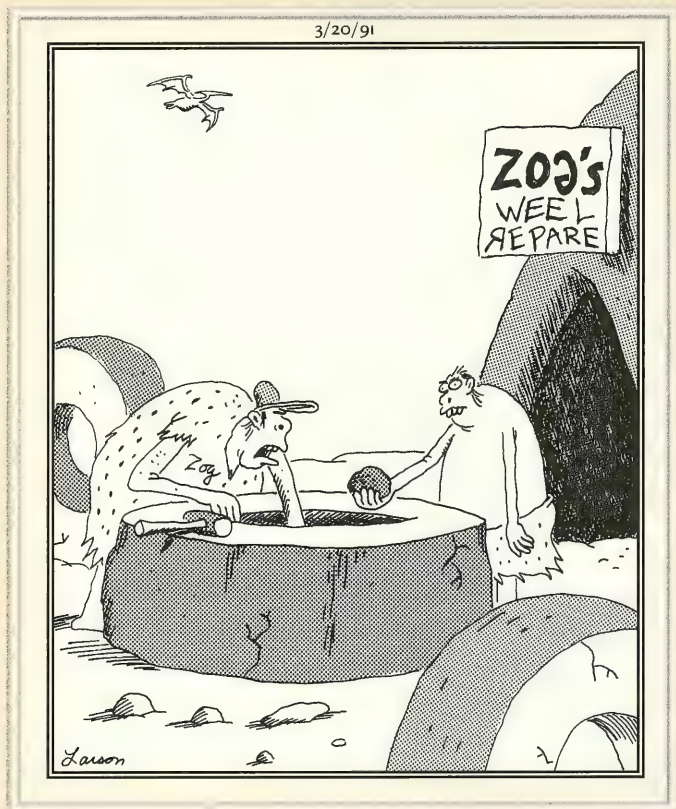
Ghost newspapers



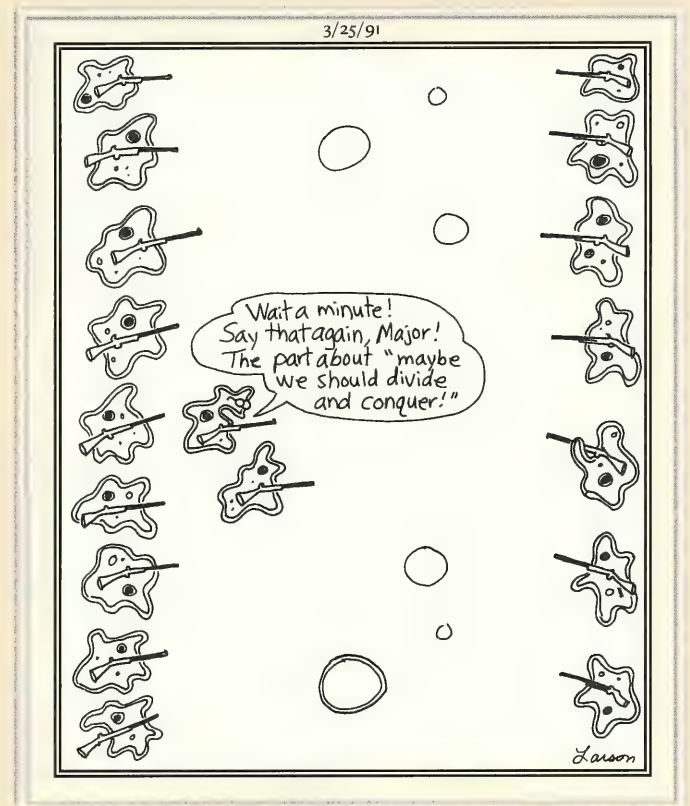
"Look at this shirt, Remus! You can zip-a-dee-doo-dah all day long for all I care, but you keep that dang Mr. Bluebird off your shoulder!"



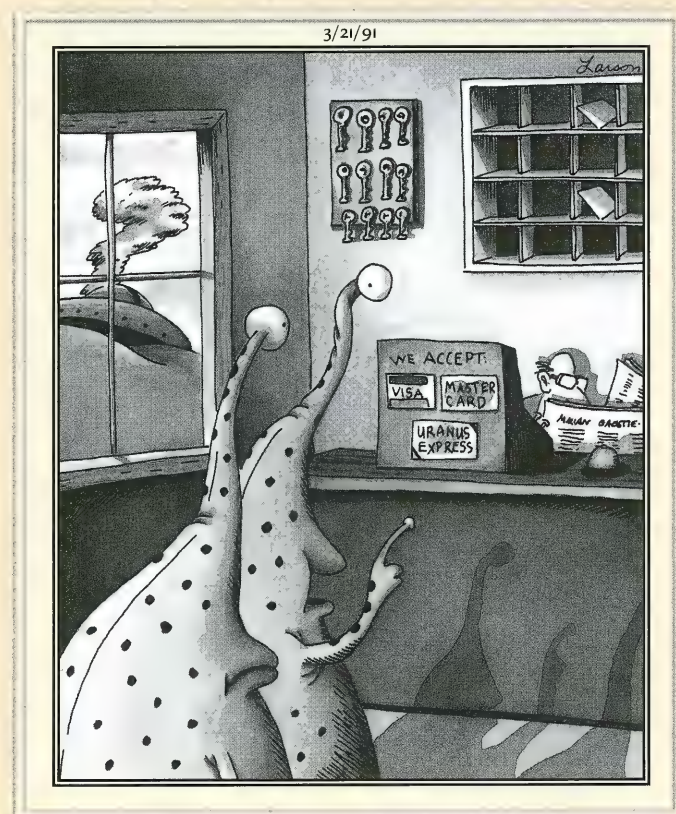
Saving on transportation costs, some pioneers were known to head west on covered skates.



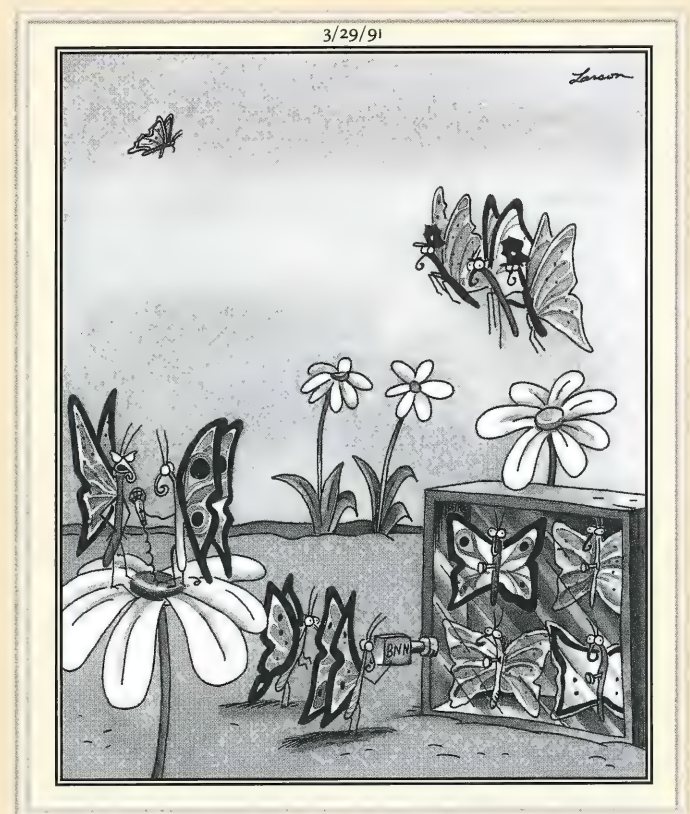
"No, no, no! ... That regular rock!
Me need Phillips!"



Amoebas at war

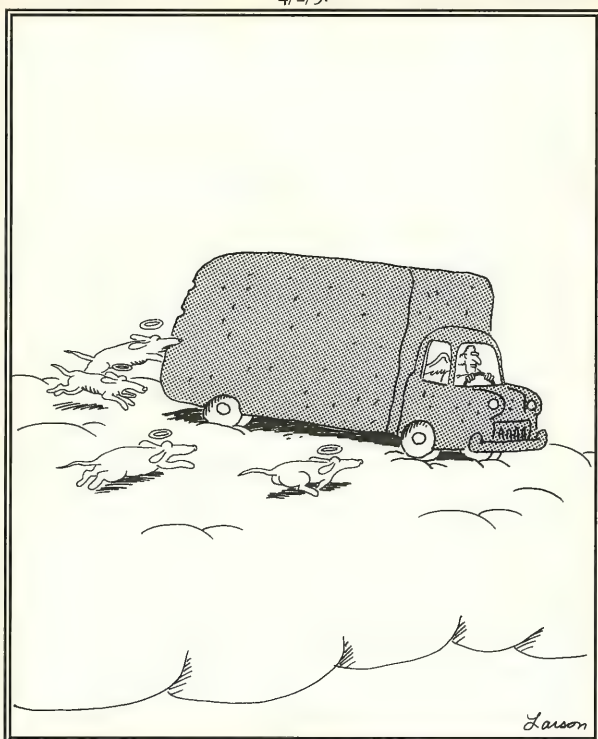


"We're in luck, Zorko!"



"Oh, the whole flower bed is still in shock.
He was such a quiet butterfly—
kept to himself mostly."

4/2/91



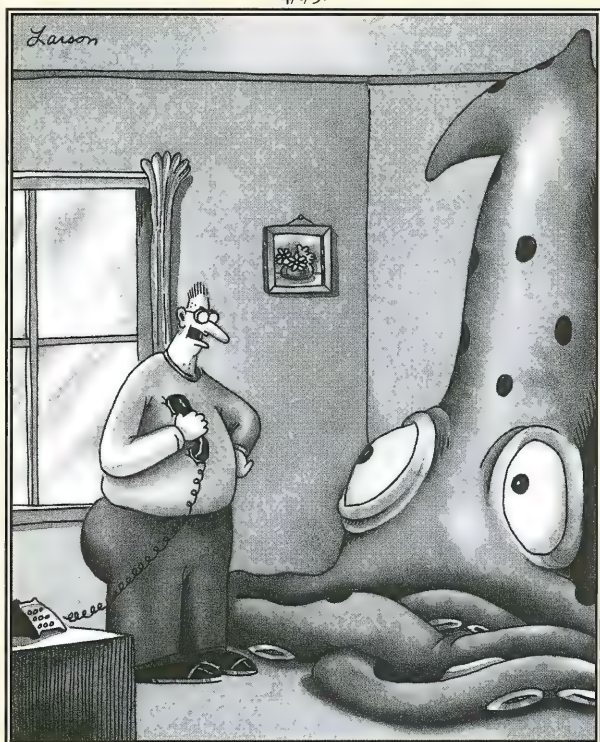
Every hour on the hour, a huge truck, made entirely of pressed ham, lumbers its way across dog heaven—and all the car chasers can decide for themselves whether or not to participate.

4/4/91



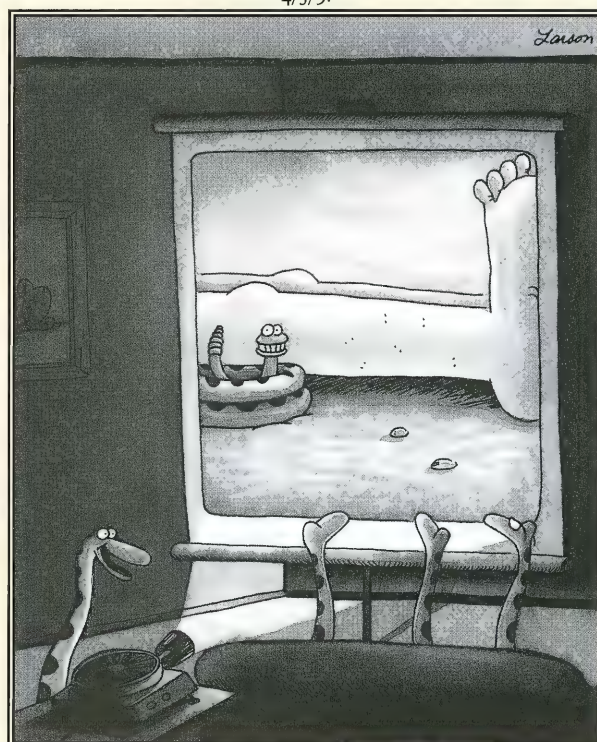
"There he is, Stan! ... On that birch tree, second branch from the top, and chattering away like crazy! ... I tell you—first come the squirrels and then come the squirrel guns."

4/1/91

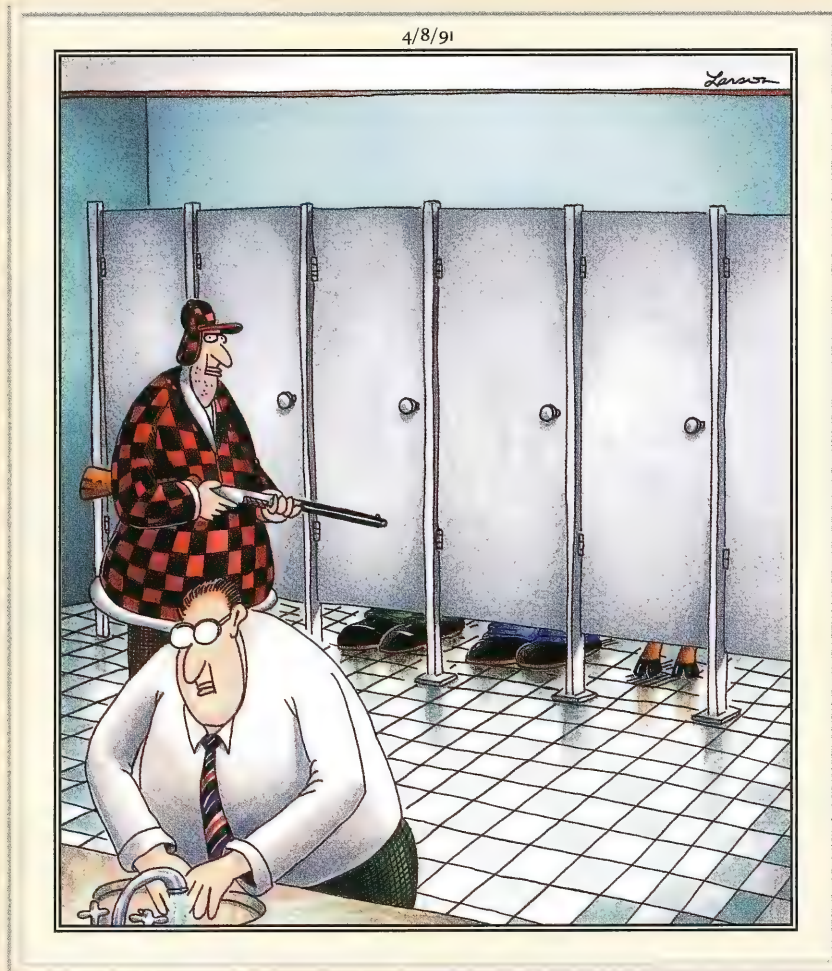


"It's Mrs. Griffin across the hall. ... Seems a giant tentacle smashed her door in today, grabbed her little shih tzu, and dragged it away. ... She called the Harrisons, but *their* squid was over at the park!"

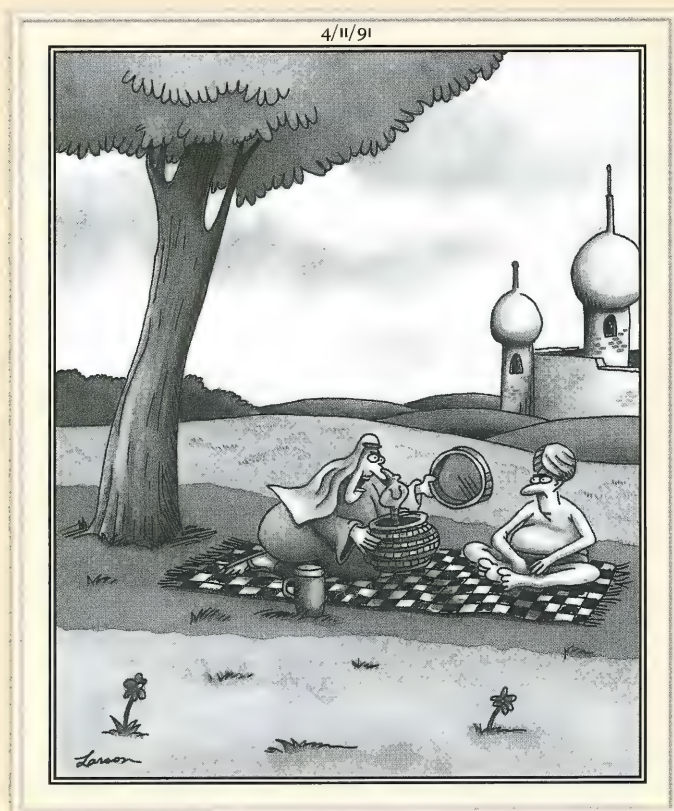
4/5/91



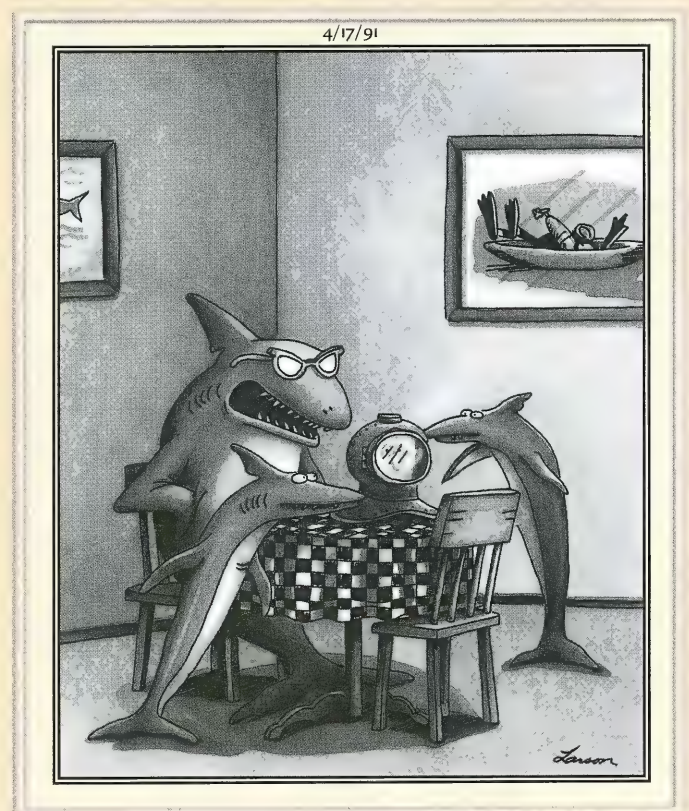
"Remember this guy, Zelda? Stumbled into the den one day and just freaked out! ... Count those fang marks, everyone!"



His rifle poised, Gus burst through the door, stopped, and listened. Nothing but the gentle sound of running water and the rustling of magazines could be heard. The trail, apparently, had been false.

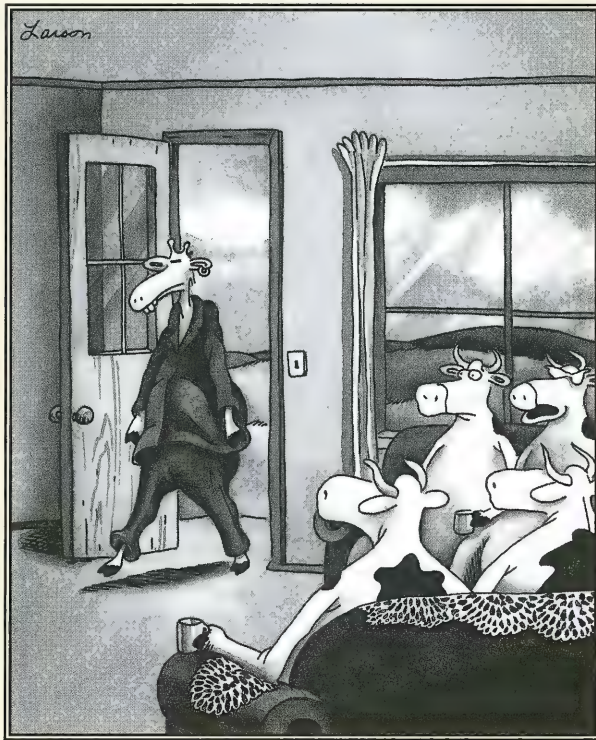


"Curse you, Ahmad! I specifically said, 'The picnic basket! Make sure you grab the picnic basket!'"



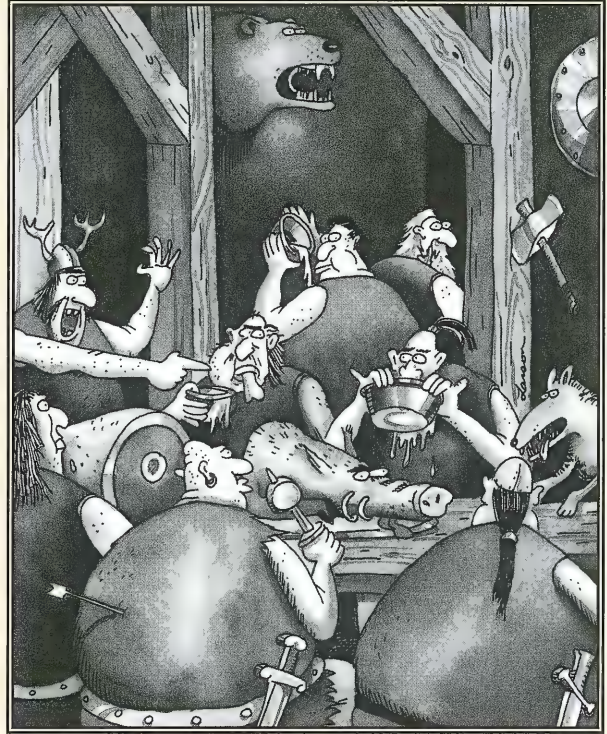
"C'mon, c'mon! You two quit circling the table and just sit down!"

4/9/91



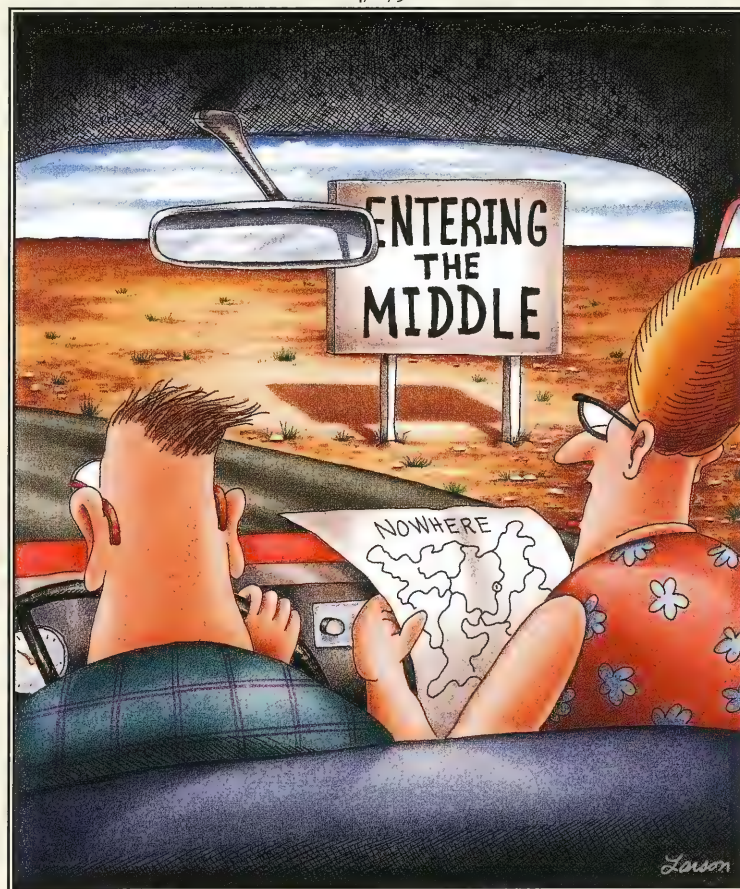
"Just ignore him. That's our rebellious young calf Matthew—he's into wearing leather clothes just for the shock value."

4/16/91

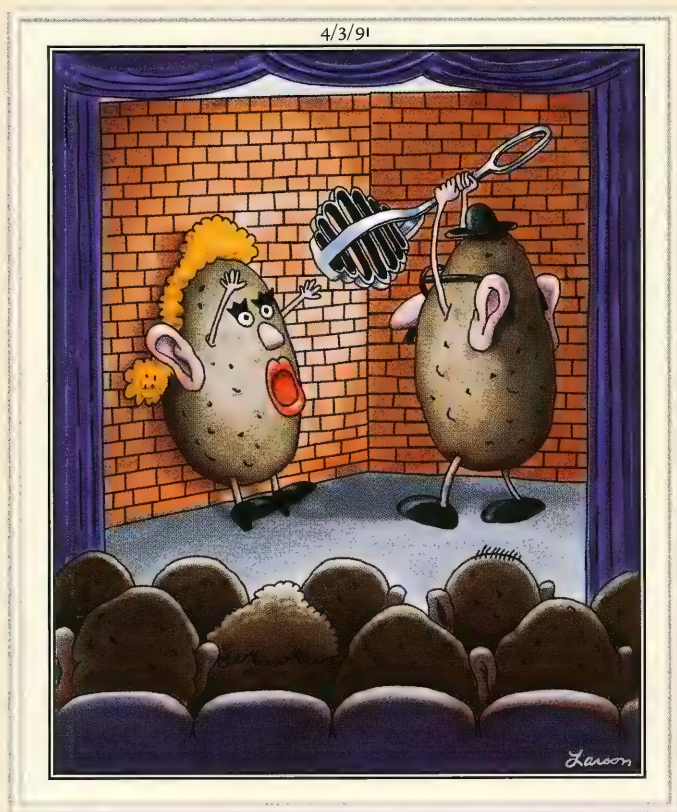


In a barbarian faux pas that quickly cost him his life, Garth is caught drinking his gruel with pinky fingers extended.

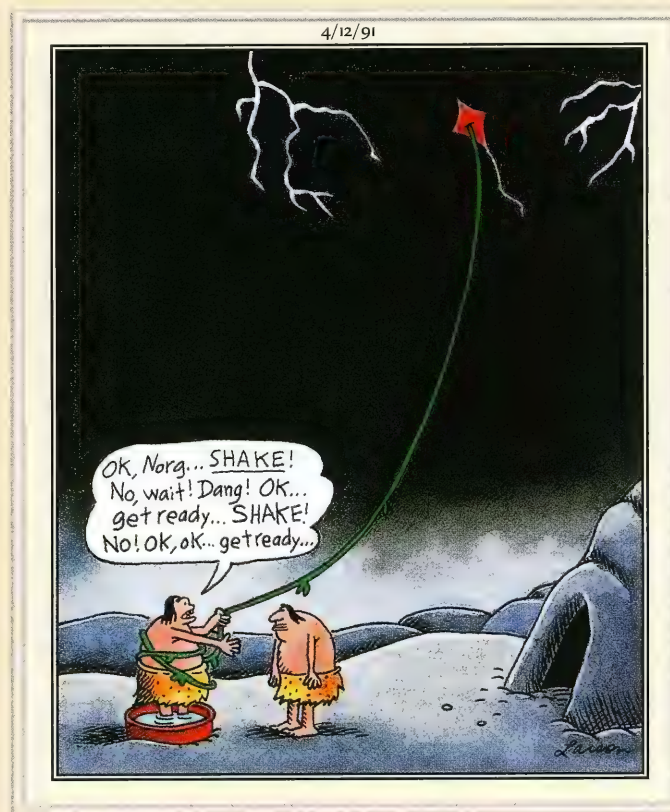
4/10/91



"Well, this is just going from bad to worse."



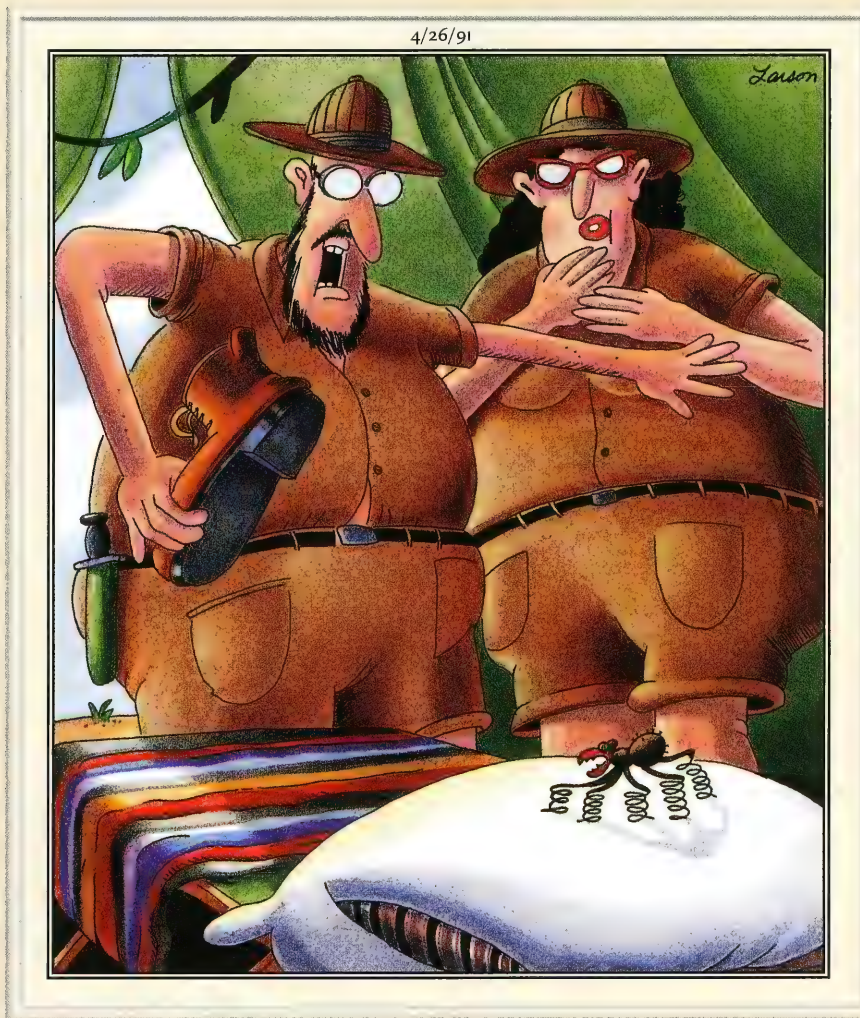
Masher films



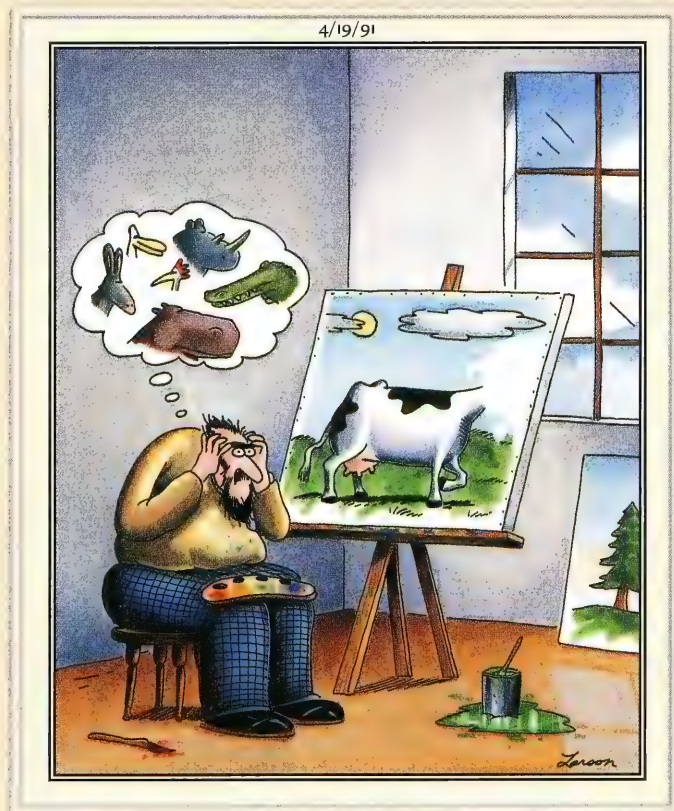
Early but unsuccessful practical jokes



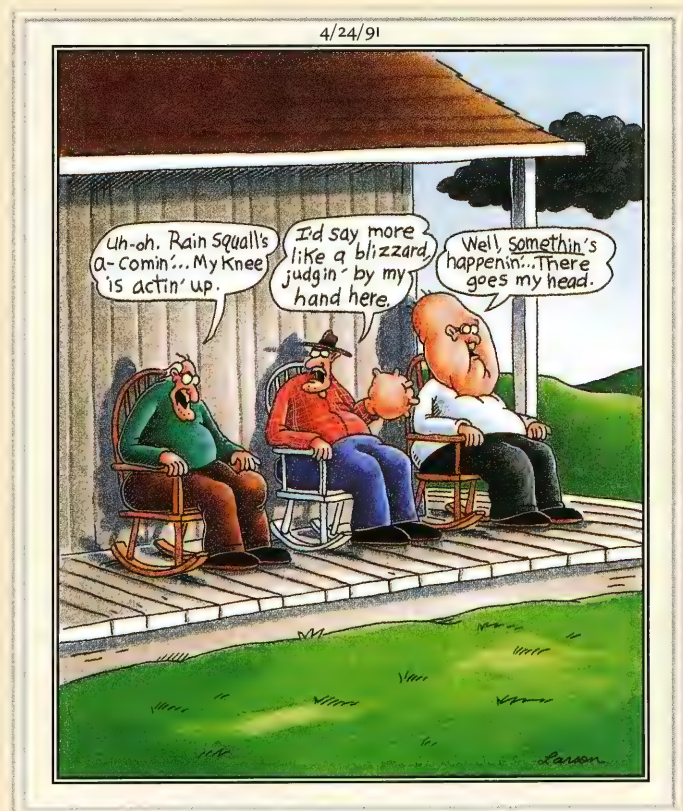
"Got him, Byron! It's something in the *Vespula* genus, all right—and ooooweeeeee does he look mad!"



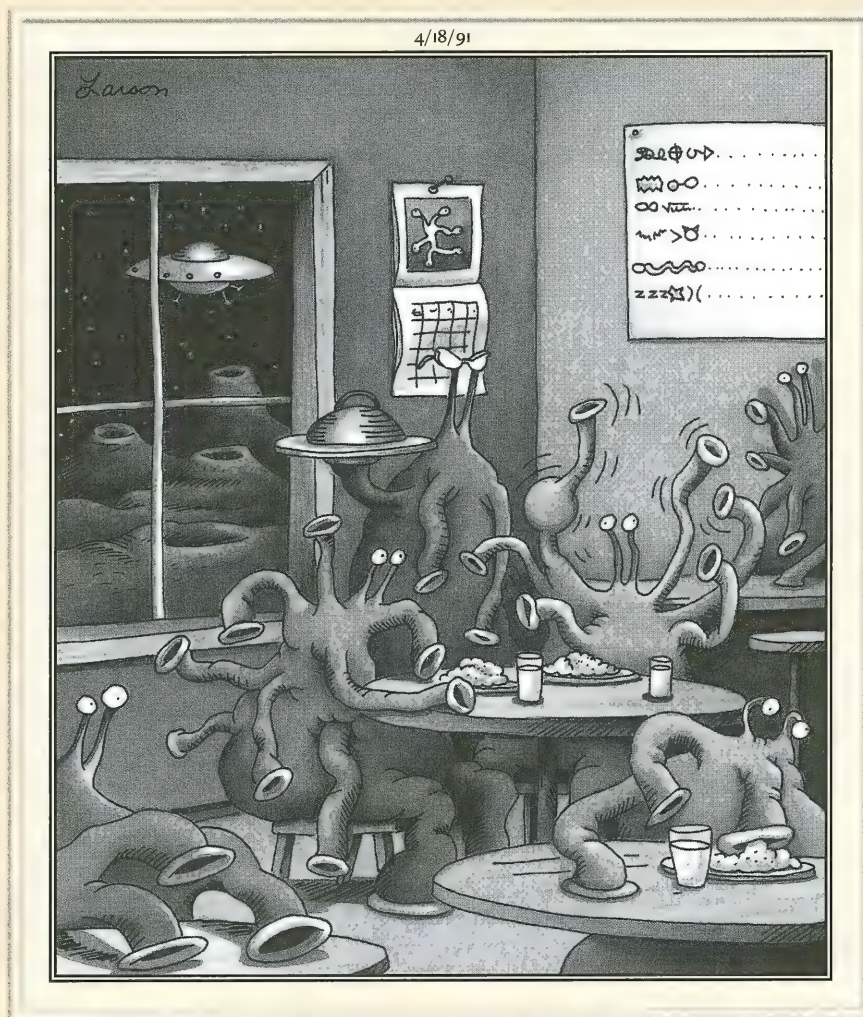
"Don't make any erratic movements, Miss Halloway. ... Not only is the truculent nature of this species amply documented, but, as you can discern for yourself, the little suckers can really jump."



The curse of "artist's block"



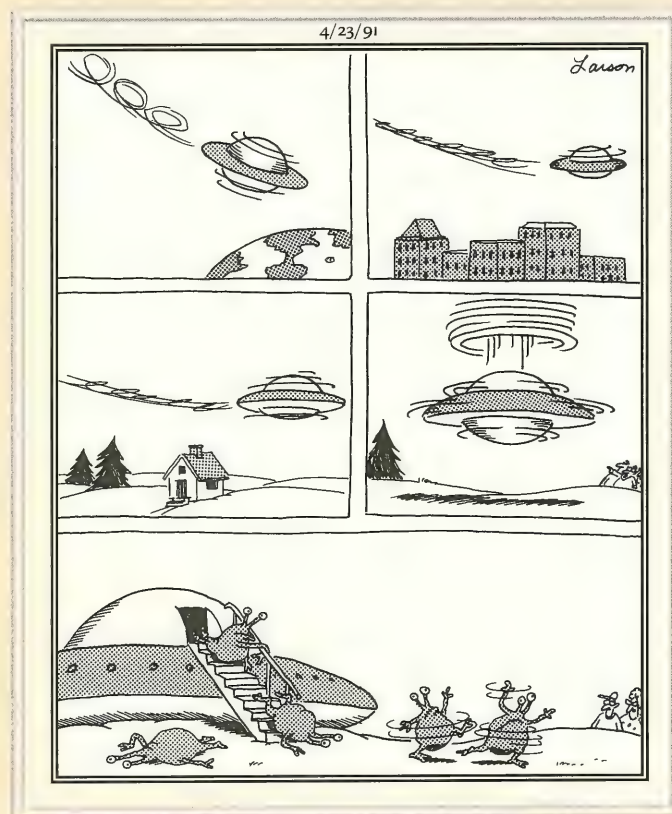
Front porch forecasters



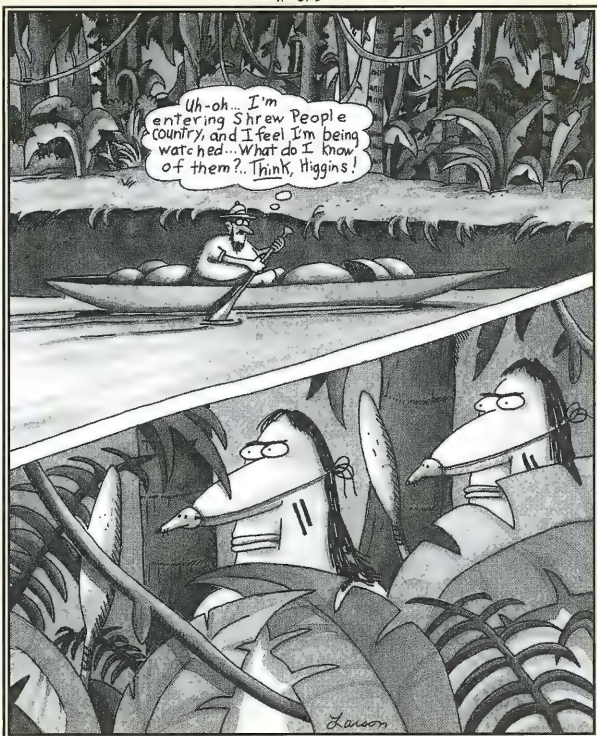
Suddenly, one of the Dorkonians began to flagellate hysterically. Something, apparently, had gone down the wrong pipe.



In some remote areas of the world, the popular sport is to watch a courageous young man avoid being hugged by a Leo Buscaglia impersonator.



4/25/91



Shrew People: quick, carnivorous, usually nocturnal; smaller but more vicious than the better-known Mole People; eat five times their own body weight every day; cannibals.

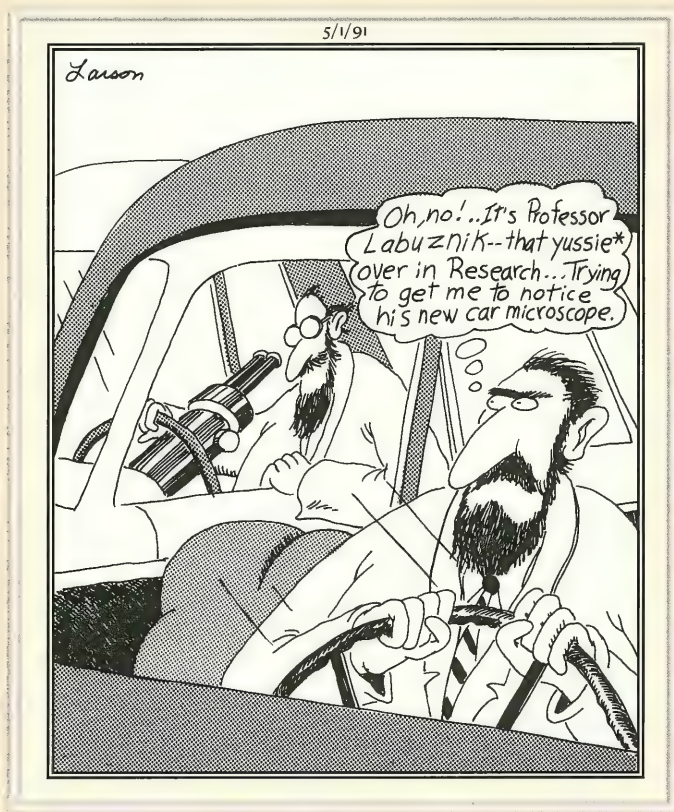
4/29/91



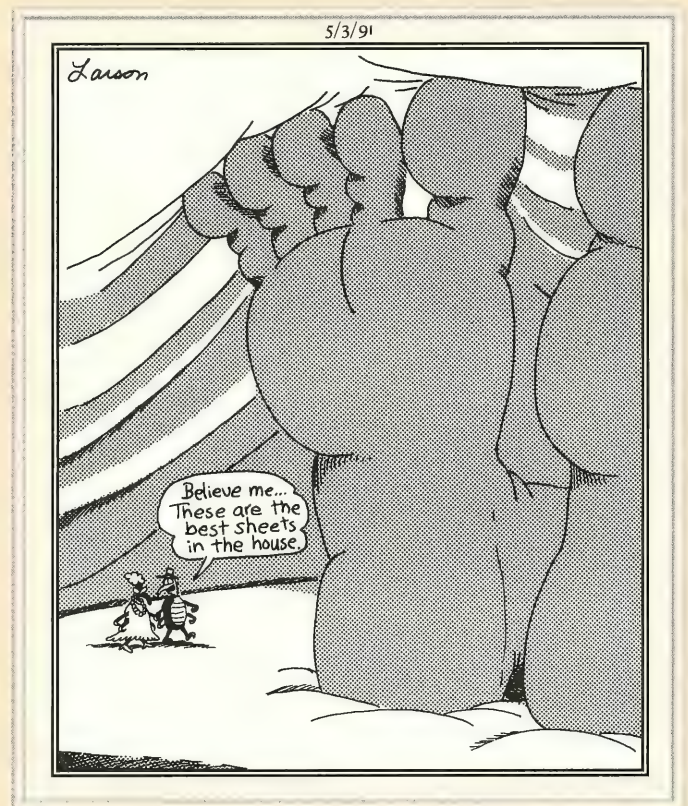
"I'm starting to feel dependent."

4/30/91

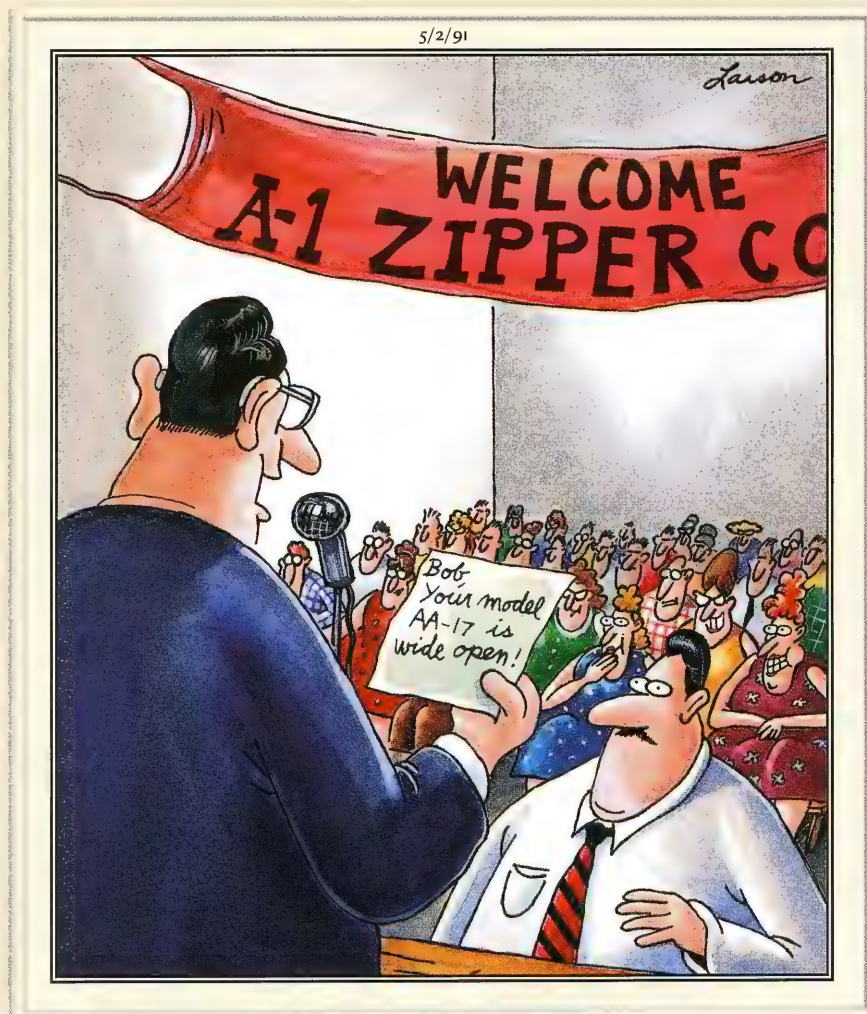




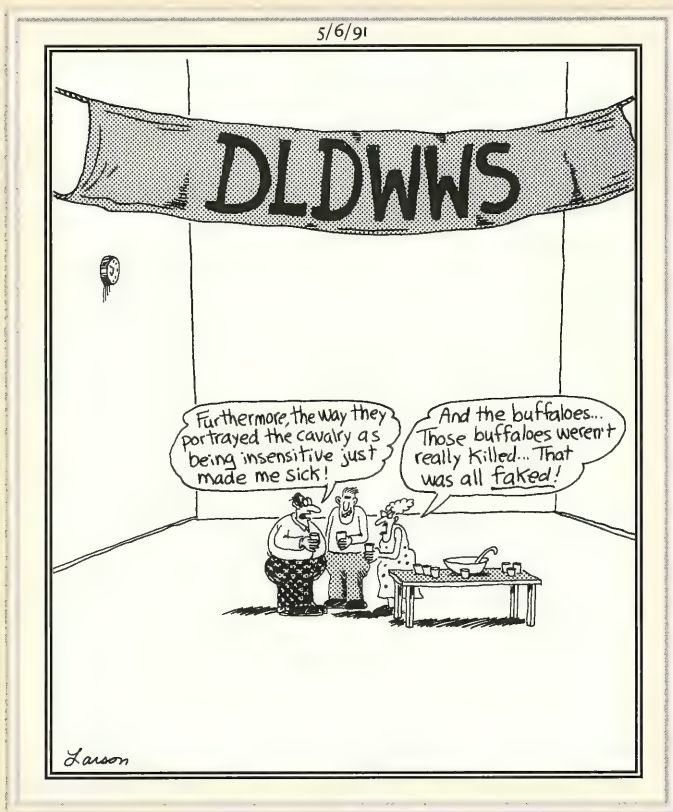
*Young urban scientist



Bedbug dinner theater

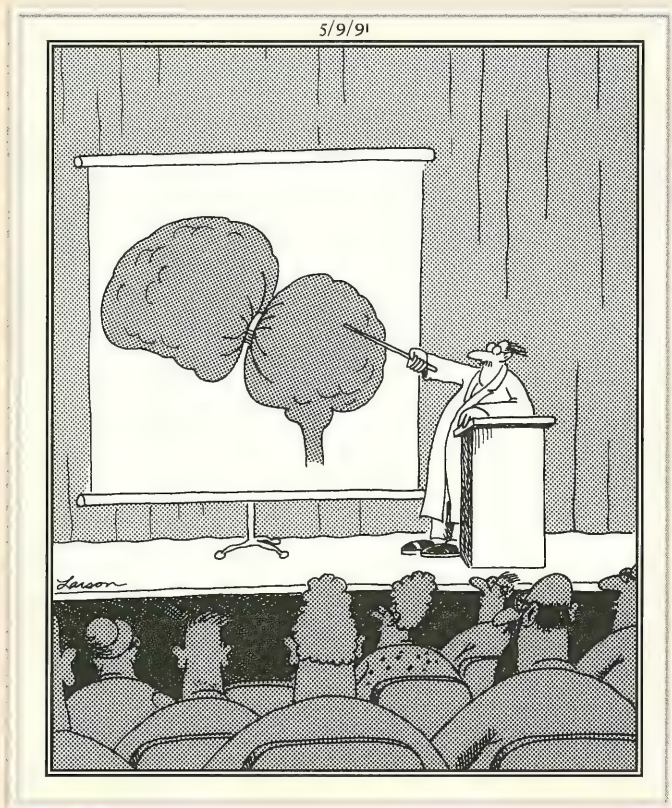


"Wait a minute, friends ... Frank Stevens in marketing—you all know Frank—has just handed me a note ..."

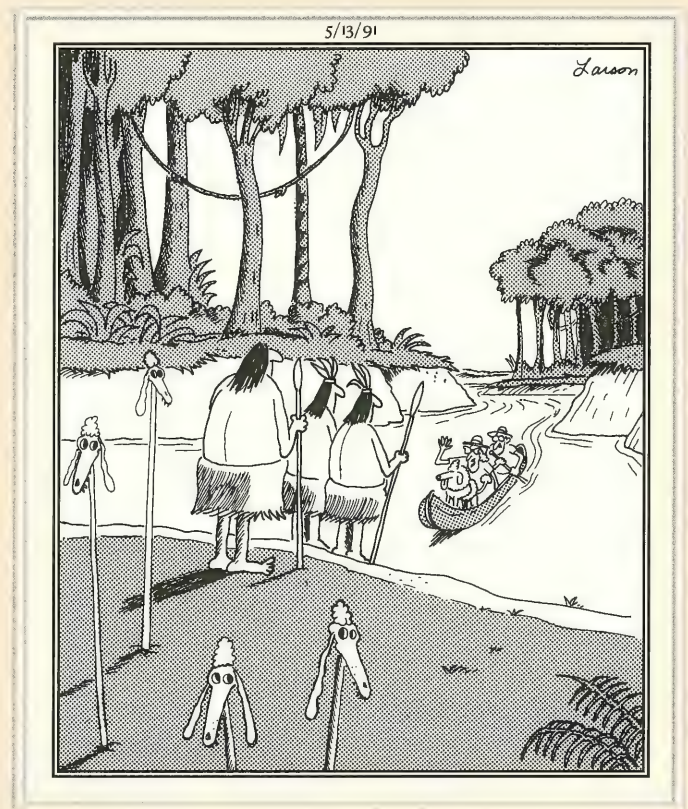


At the international meeting of the Didn't Like *Dances with Wolves* Society

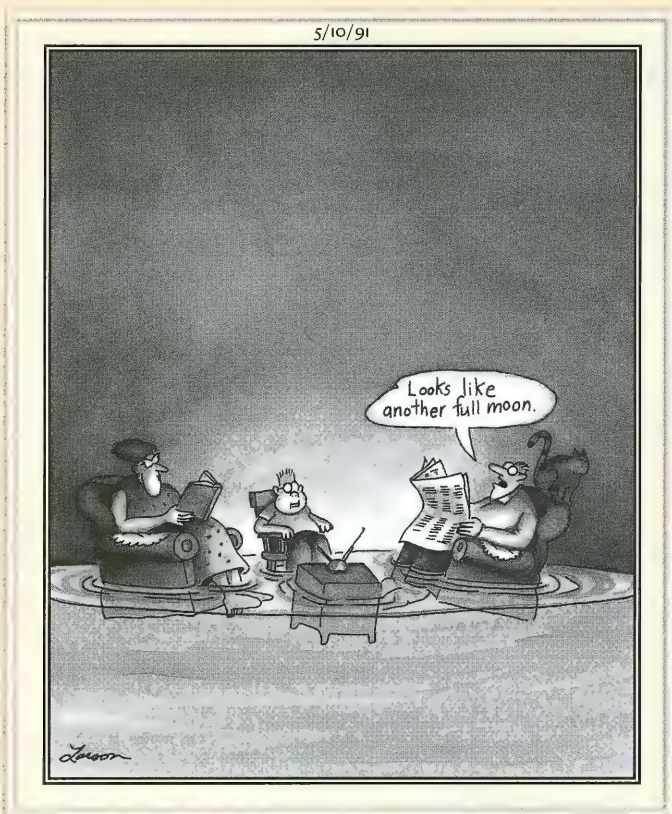




Professor Lundquist, in a seminar on compulsive thinkers, illustrates his brain-stapling technique.



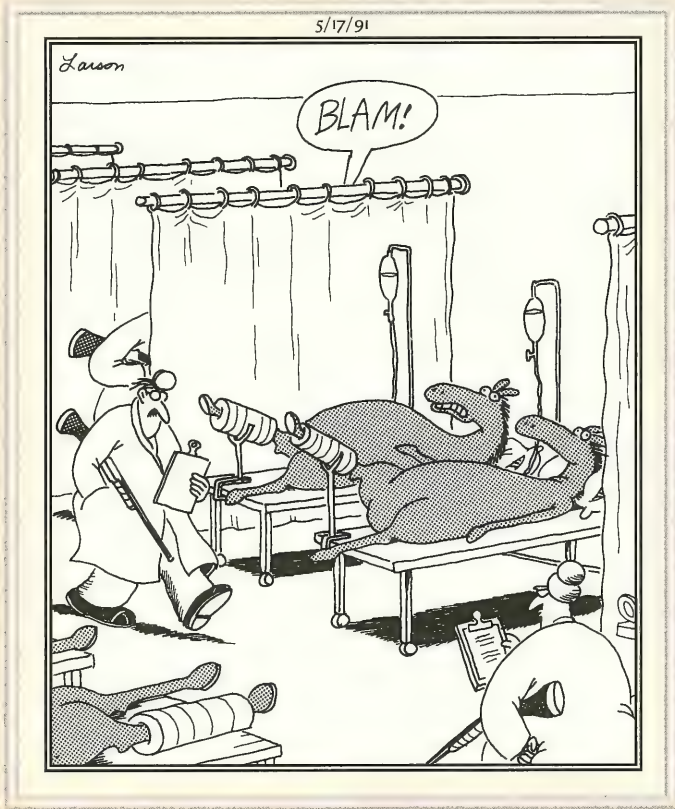
Although nervous, the Dickersons were well-received by this tribe of unique headhunters. It was Pooki, regrettably, that was to bear the brunt of their aggression.



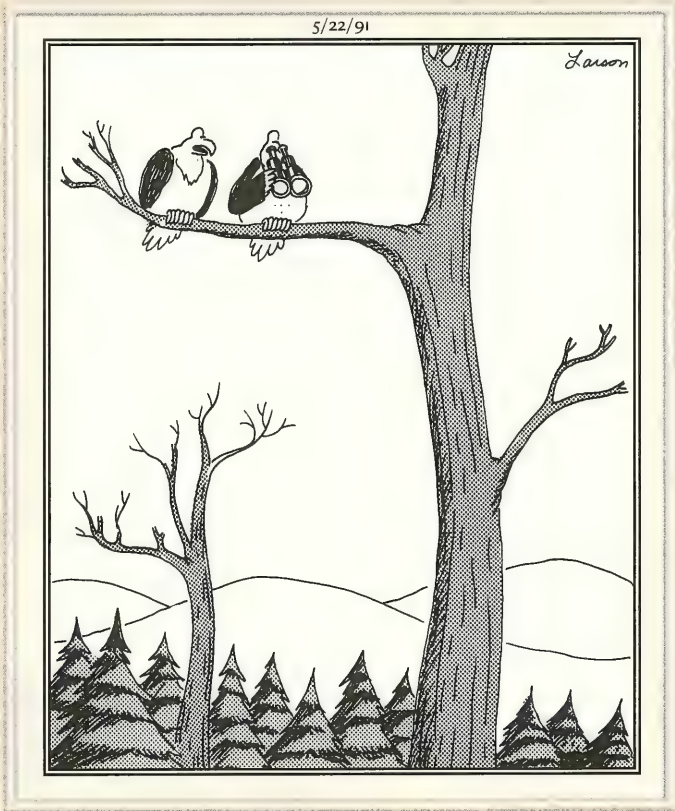
The Ty-D-Bol family at home



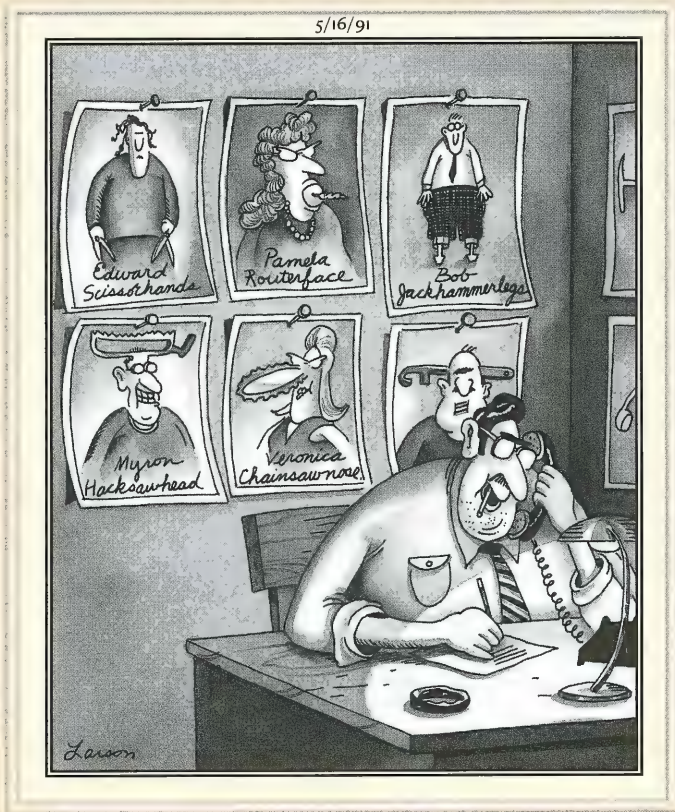
"Look at us, Hank. ... I tell you, there was a time when we did more than just *watch* the henhouse."



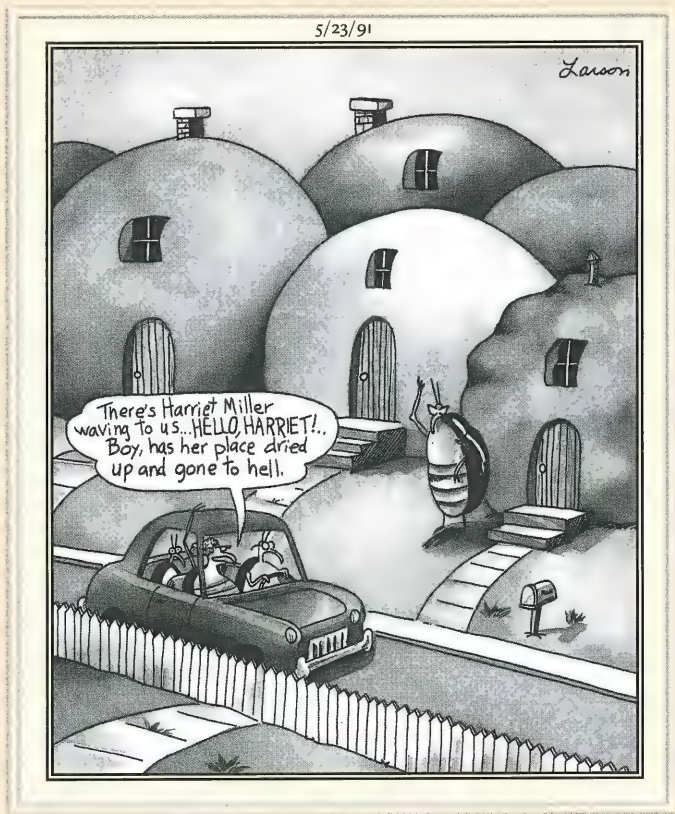
Horse hospitals



"You're cheating, Ned."



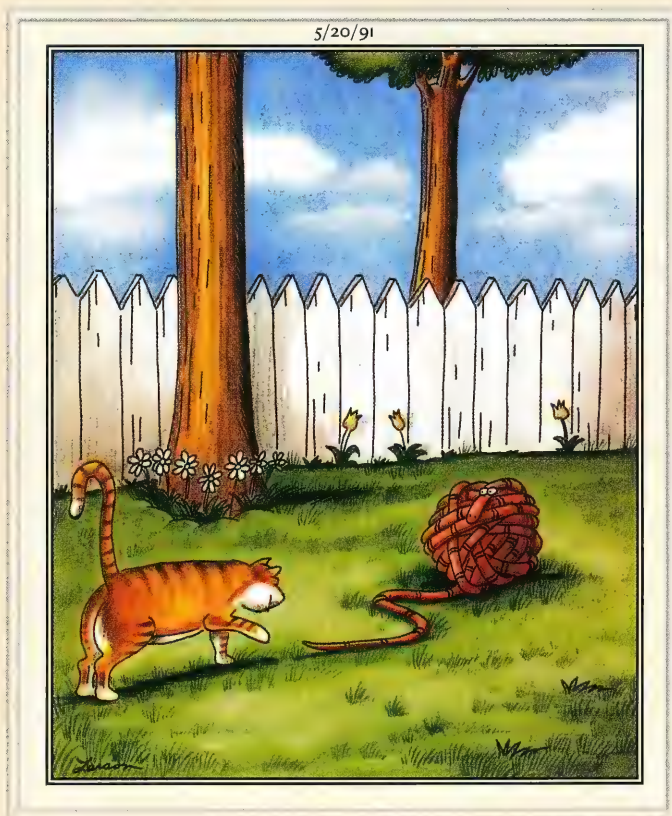
"Al's All-in-One Talent Agency and Construction Company, may I help you?"



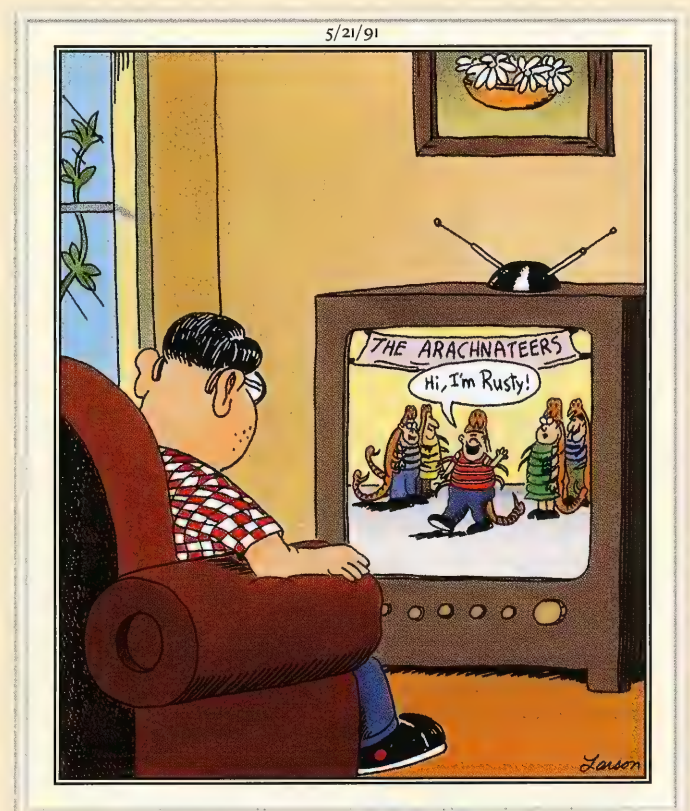
Dung beetle neighborhoods



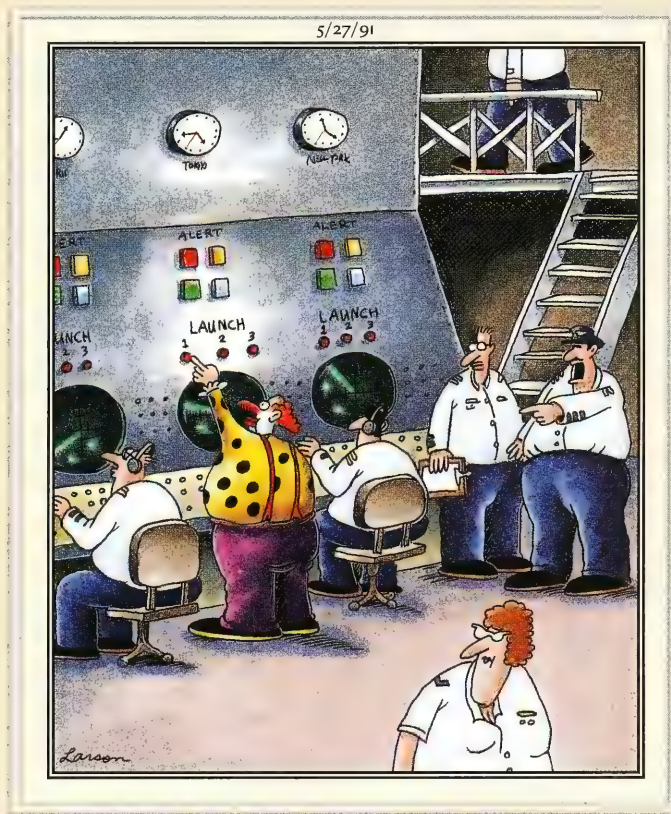
George Washington: general, president, visionary, ballroom break dancer.



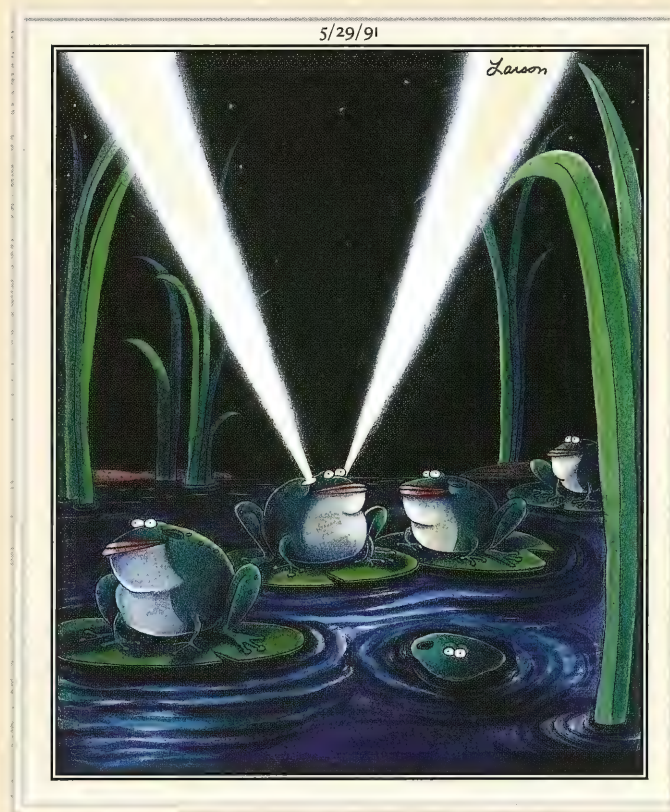
The urban catsnake and its prey



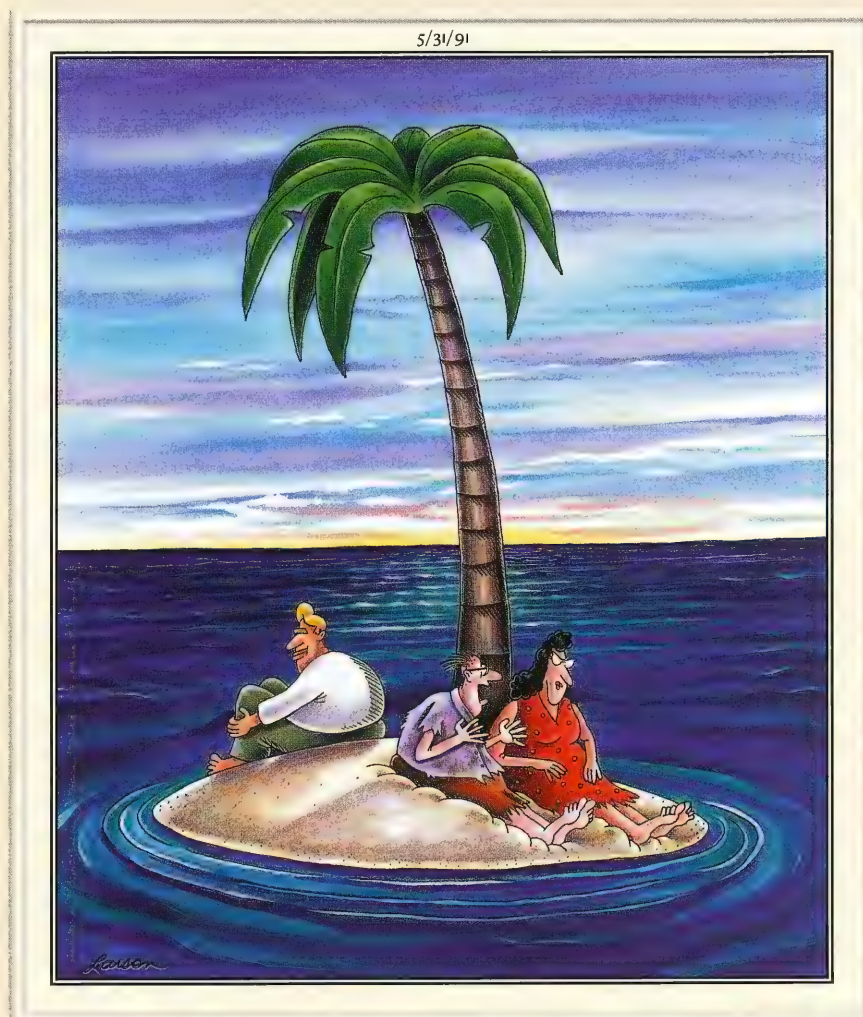
Kids' shows that bombed



“Hey! What’s that clown think he’s doing?”

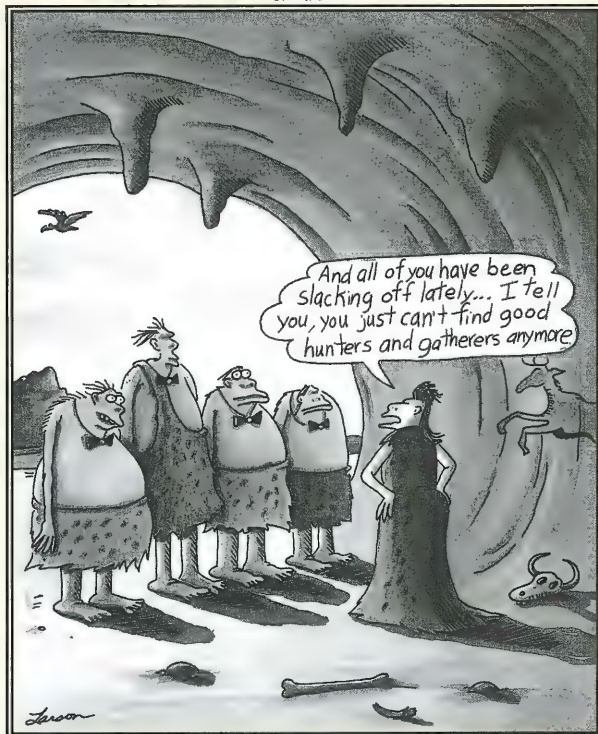


What really happened to Tinkerbell



“What? You’ve met someone else? What are you saying? ...
Oh, my God! It’s not what’s-his-name, is it?”

5/24/91



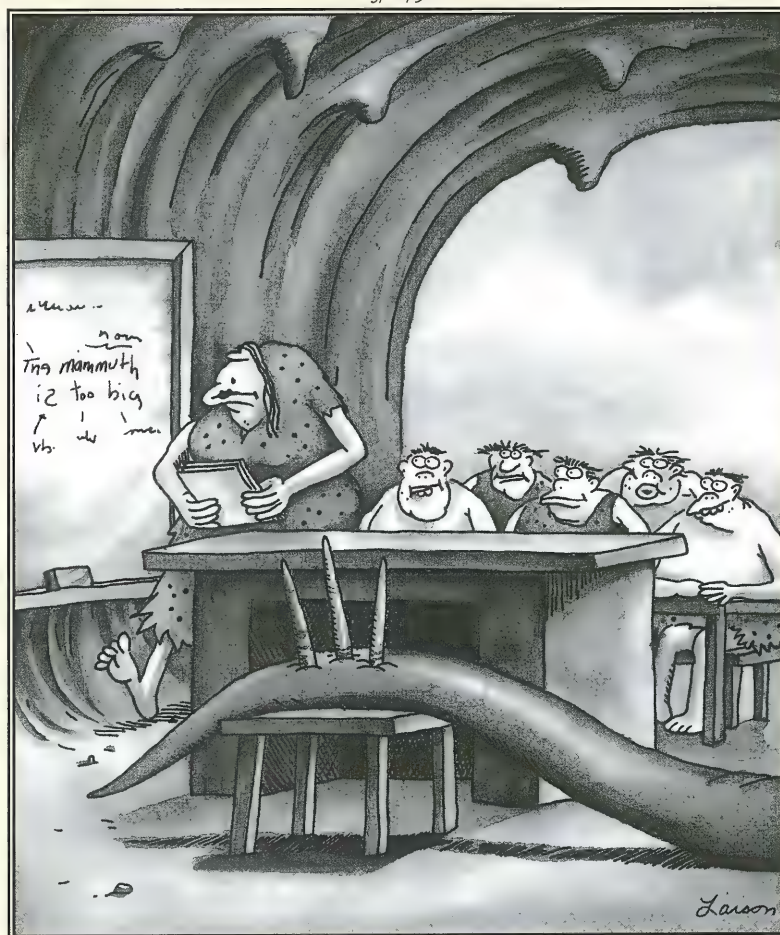
Leona Helmsley of the Paleozoic

5/30/91



"We can't go this way either, Simmons. ... See those lines? That's the international cartoon symbol for glass! ... He's got us good, the dirty bugger."

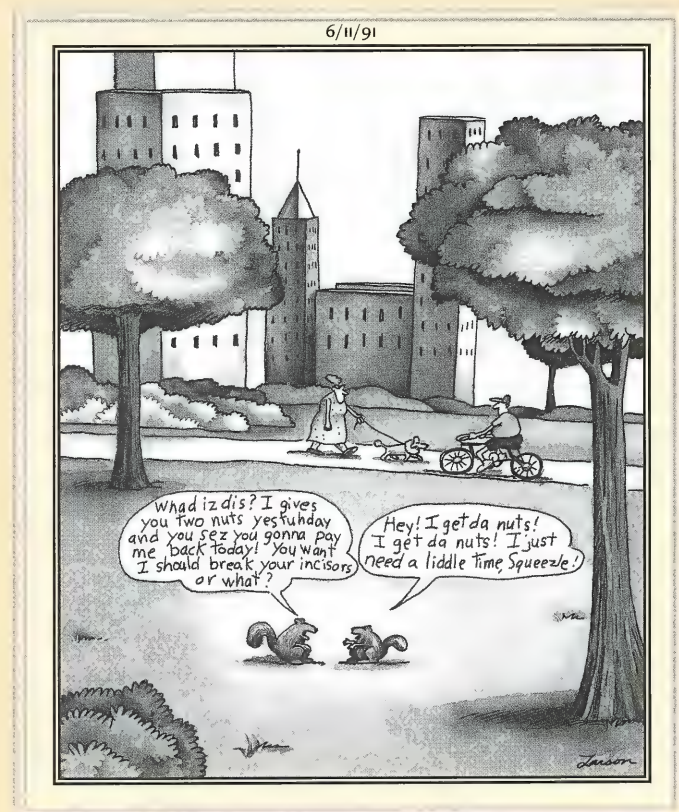
5/28/91



The hazards of teaching young Neanderthals



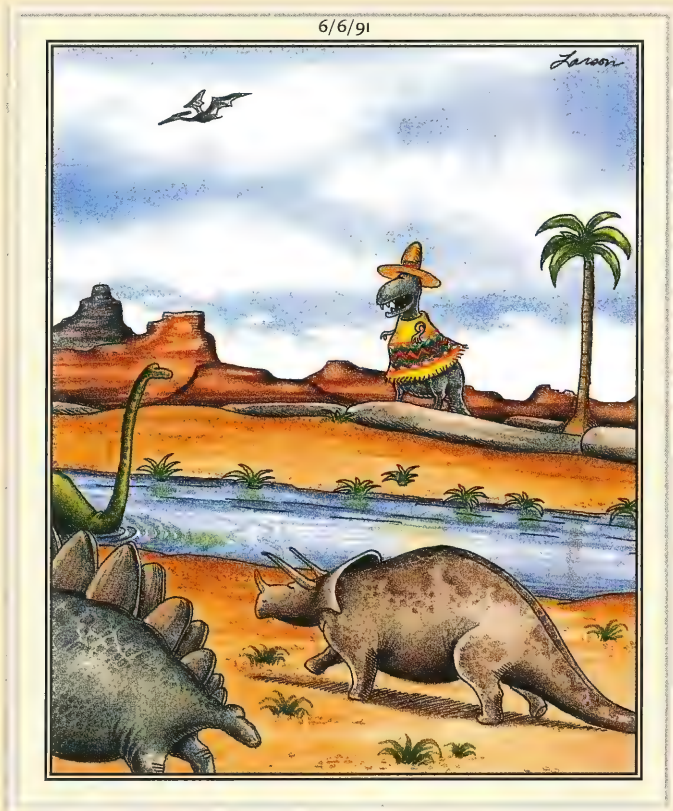
"Well, we're lost. I knew from the start that it was just plain idiotic to choose a leader based simply on the size of his or her respective pith helmet. Sorry, Cromwell."



The squirrels of Central Park



Wiener dog distribution centers



However, there was no question that, on the south side of the river, the land was ruled by the awesome *Tyrannosaurus Mex.*



Saturday mornings in cockroach households

6/12/91



6/10/91



6/14/91



6/13/91



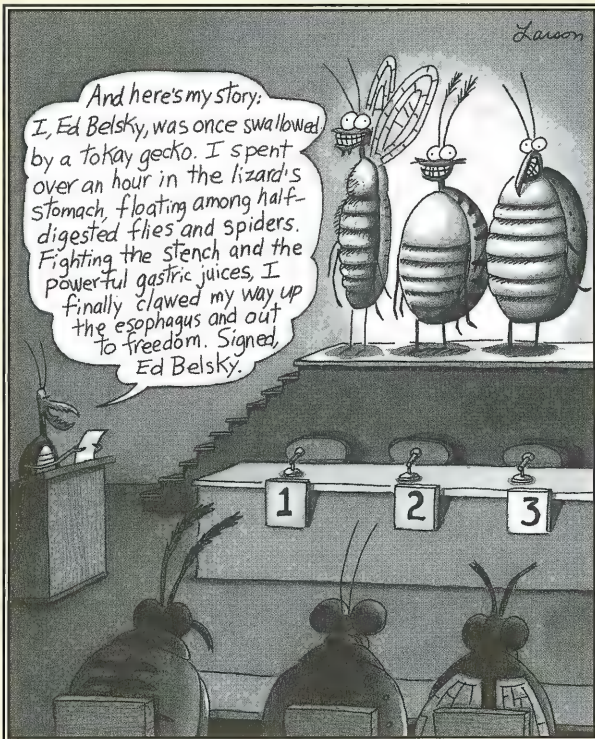
"The guy creeps me out, Zeena. Sure, he looks like he's just minding his own business—but he always keeps that one eye on my house."

6/17/91



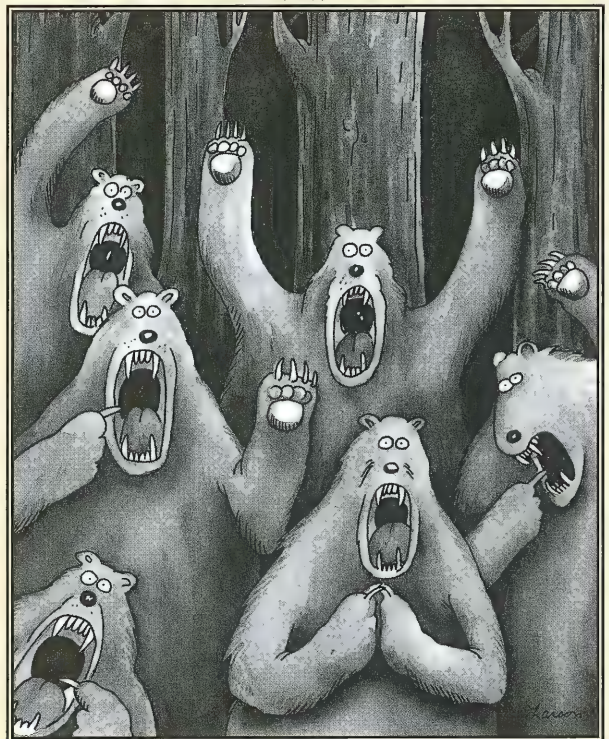
"Take a good, long look at this. ... We don't know what it is, but it's the only part of the buffalo we don't use."

6/18/91



Insect game shows

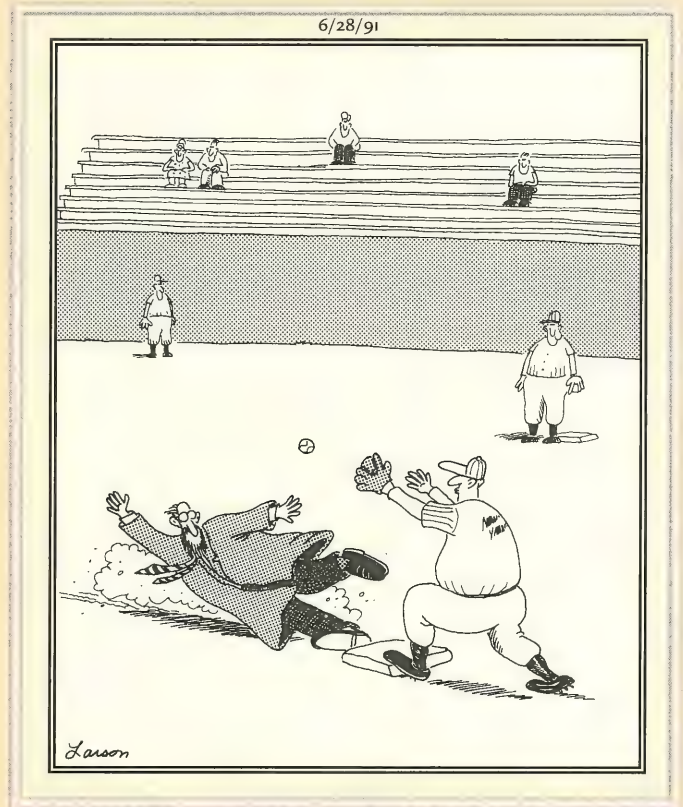
6/20/91



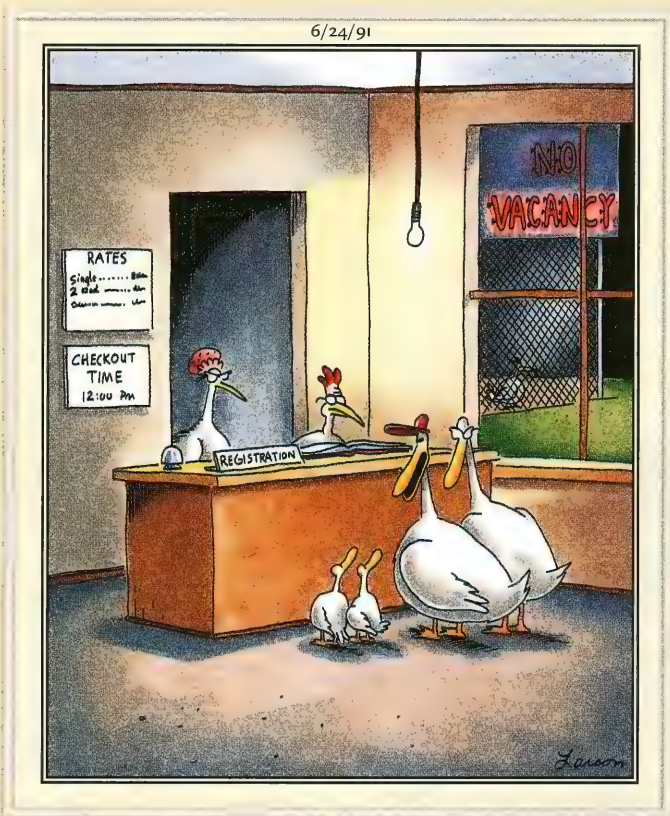
Please do not feed the cartoon bears.



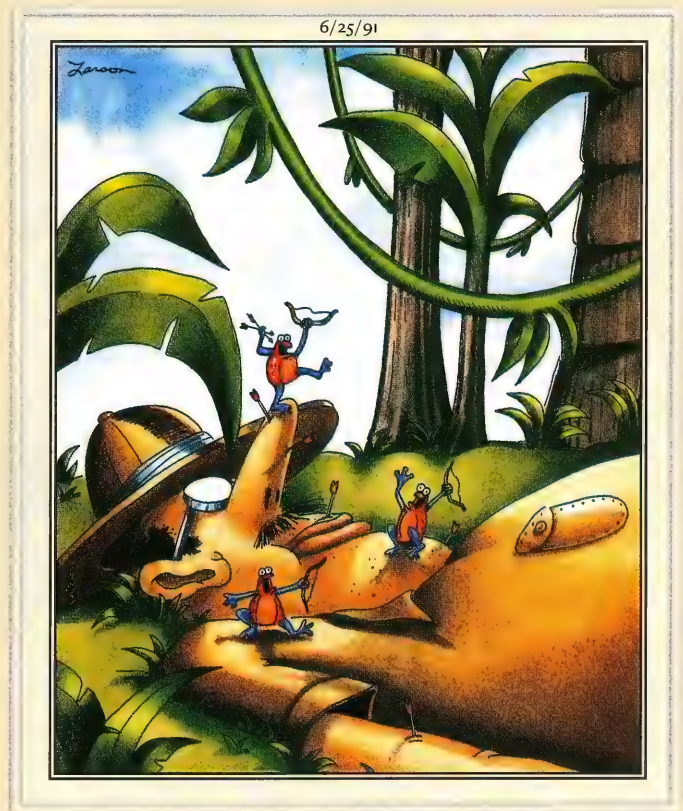
Mr. and Mrs. Bojangles' rebellious son



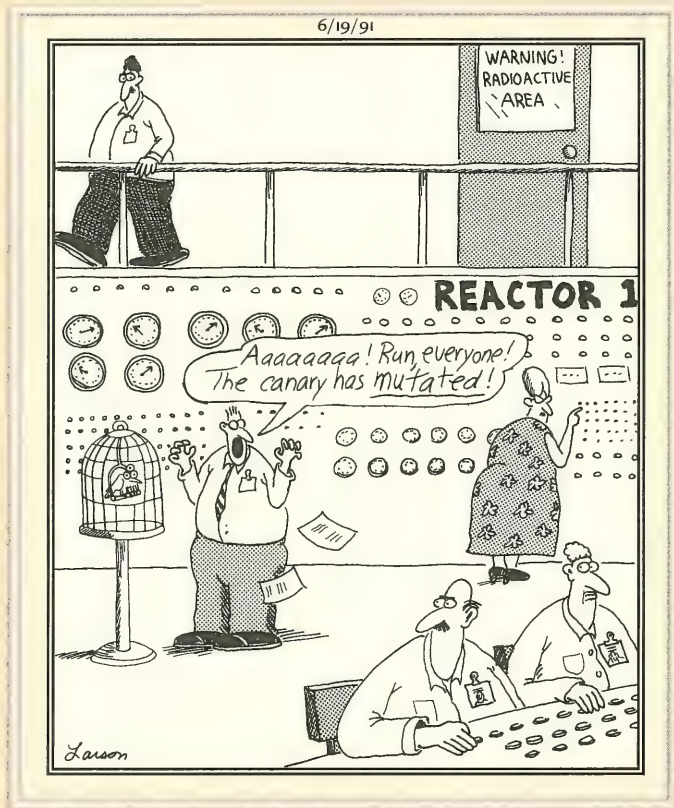
Freudian slide



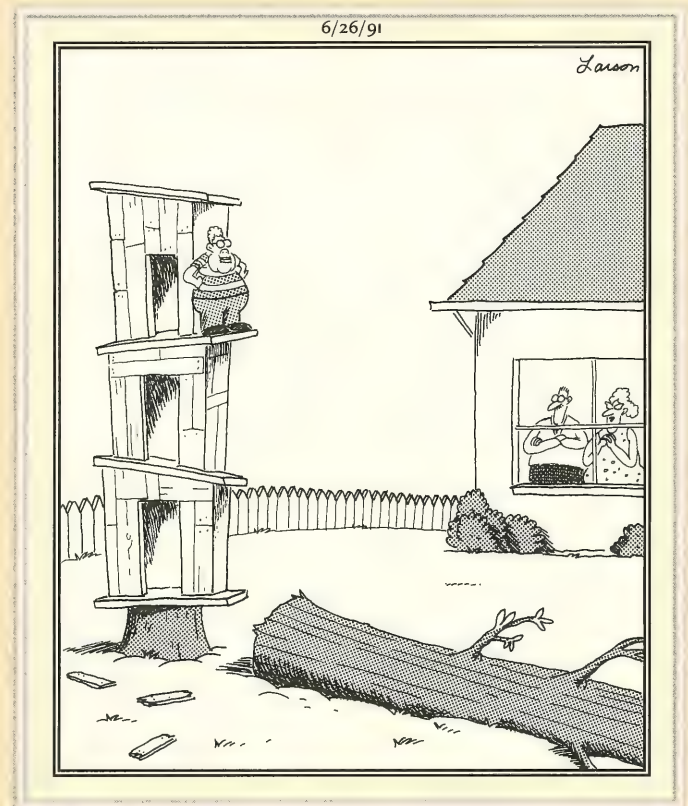
"Sorry, kids—they've got cable, but no pond."



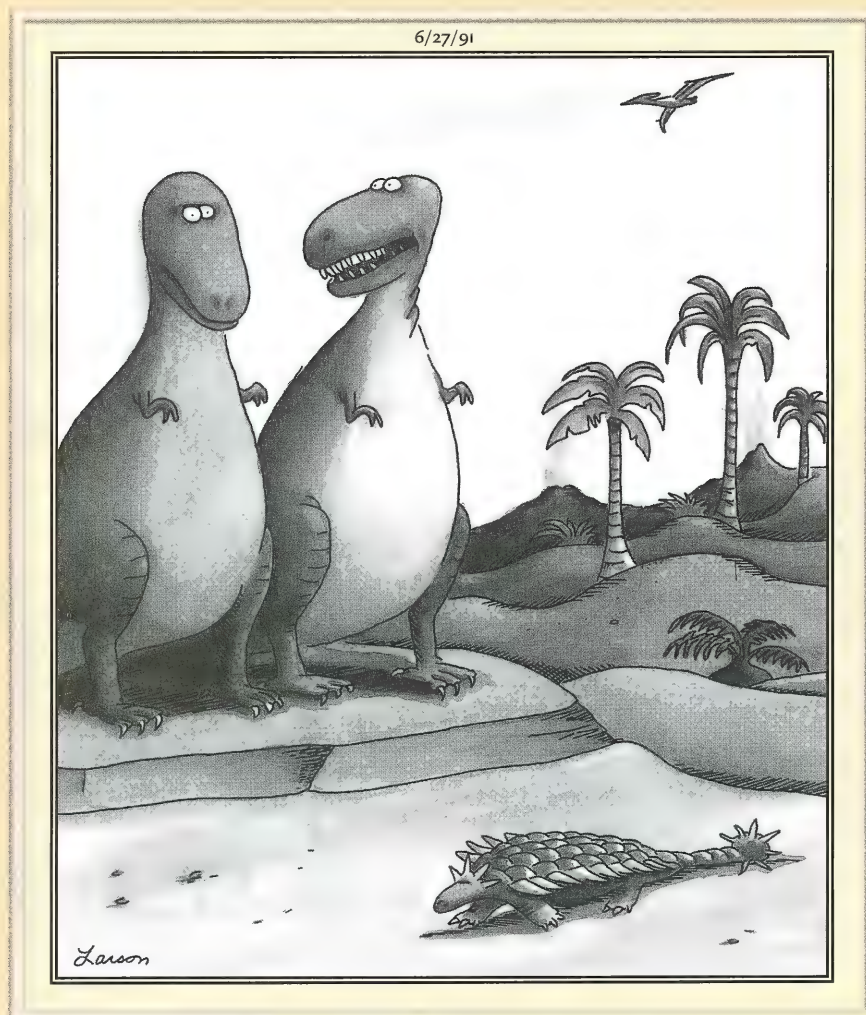
The rarely seen victory dance of the poison-arrow frog



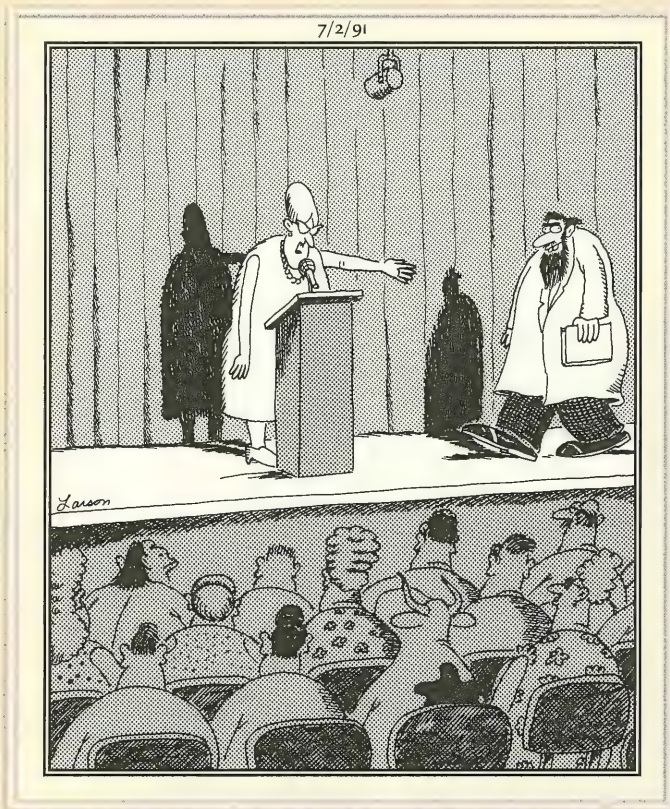
Inside a nuclear power plant



While his parents beamed, little Tommy Lundquist, future developer, surveyed the view from his newly constructed treehouse.



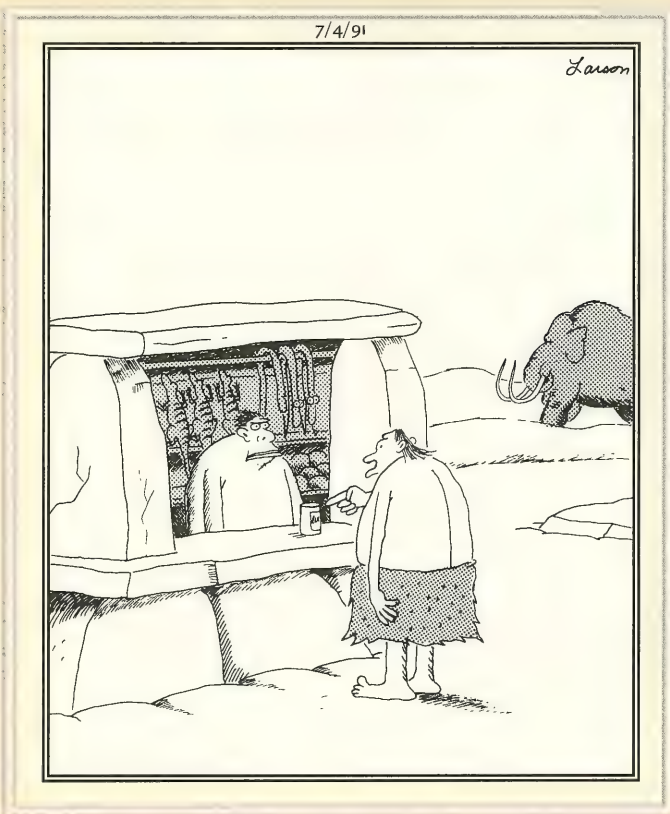
"It's roughage, and that's about it."



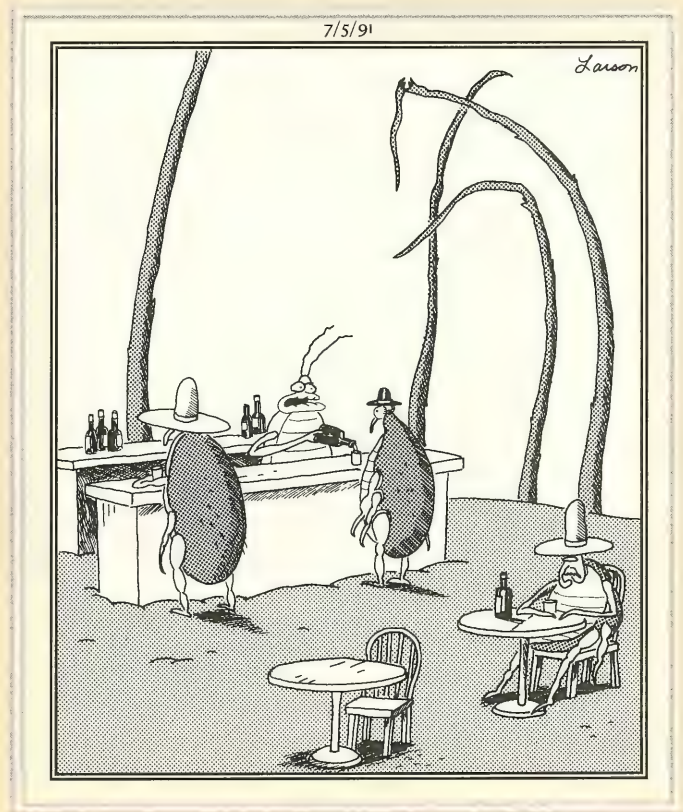
"And so please welcome one of this cartoon's most esteemed scientist-like characters, Professor Boris Needleman, here to present his paper, 'Beyond the Border: Analysis, Statistical Probability and Speculation of the Existence of Other Cartoons on The Known Comics Page.'"



The Blob family at home

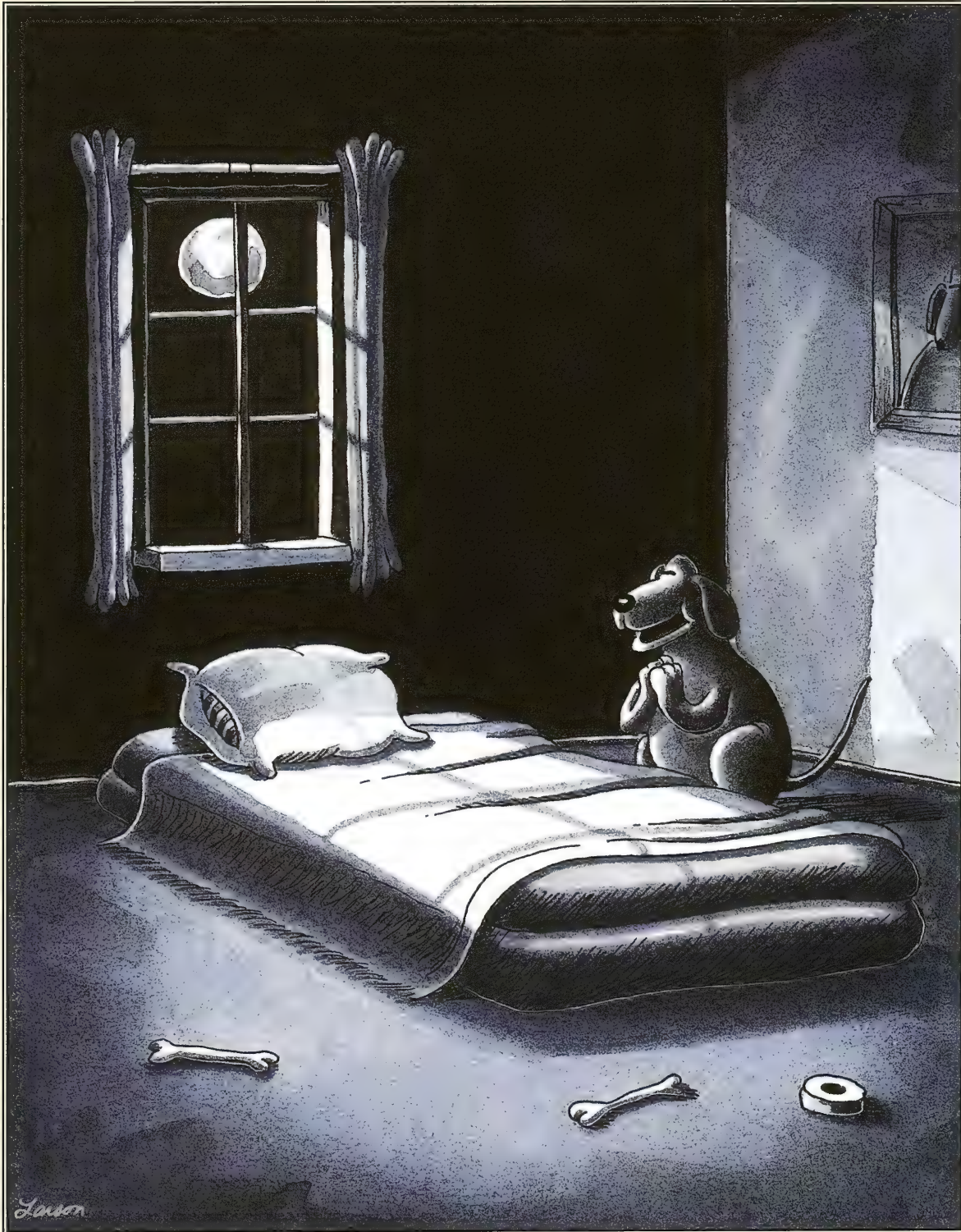


"Hey! Not this new stuff. ... Me want Jurassic Coke."



"You're a long way from Big Poodle, stranger. ... This here is Dead Skunk, and if I were you I'd just keep on movin'."

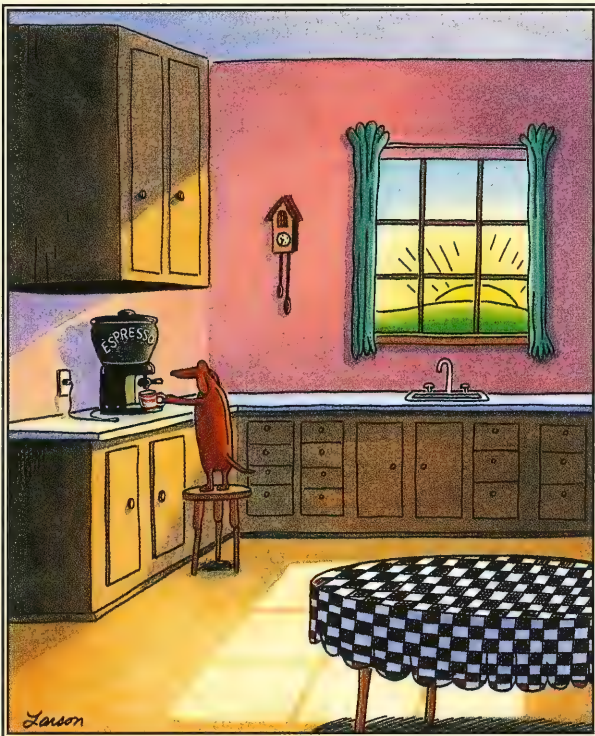
7/3/91



“... And please let Mom, Dad, Rex, Ginger, Tucker, me,
and all the rest of the family see color.”

*Editor's note: Gary leaves
for a one-month vacation.*

8/5/91



While their owners sleep, nervous little dogs prepare for their day.

8/7/91



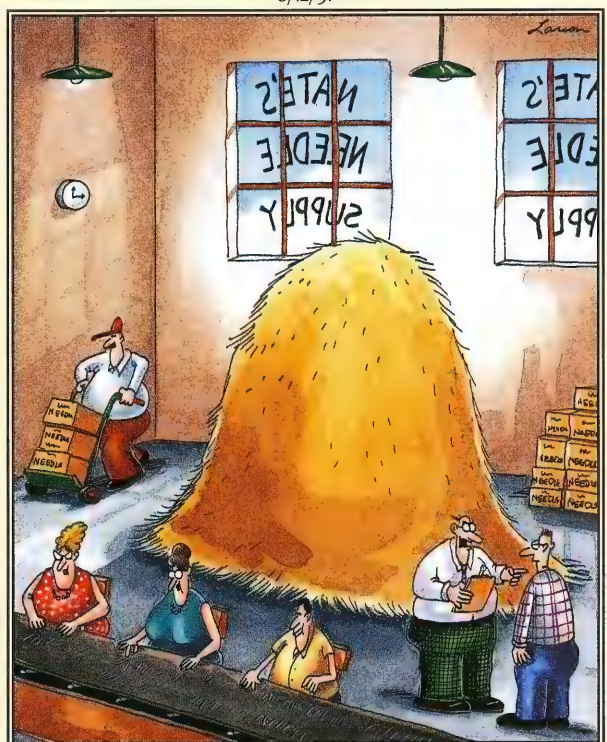
"I'm worried about Frank these days. ... It seems he just can't unwind."

8/6/91

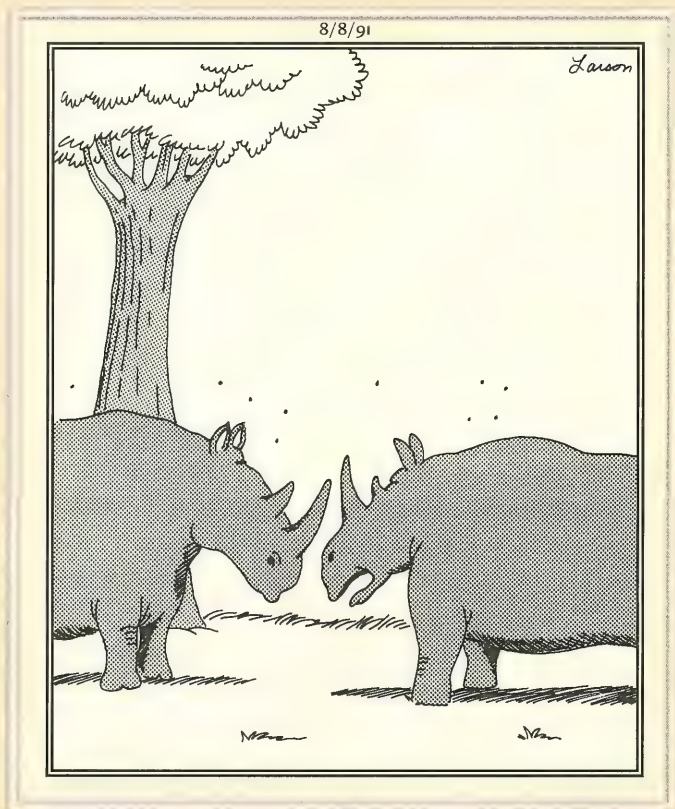


In 12th-century Pisa, Italy, the construction firm of Morrelli and Sons, whose members were all afflicted with a genetic disorder in which the left leg was considerably shorter than the right, begin work on a new tower.

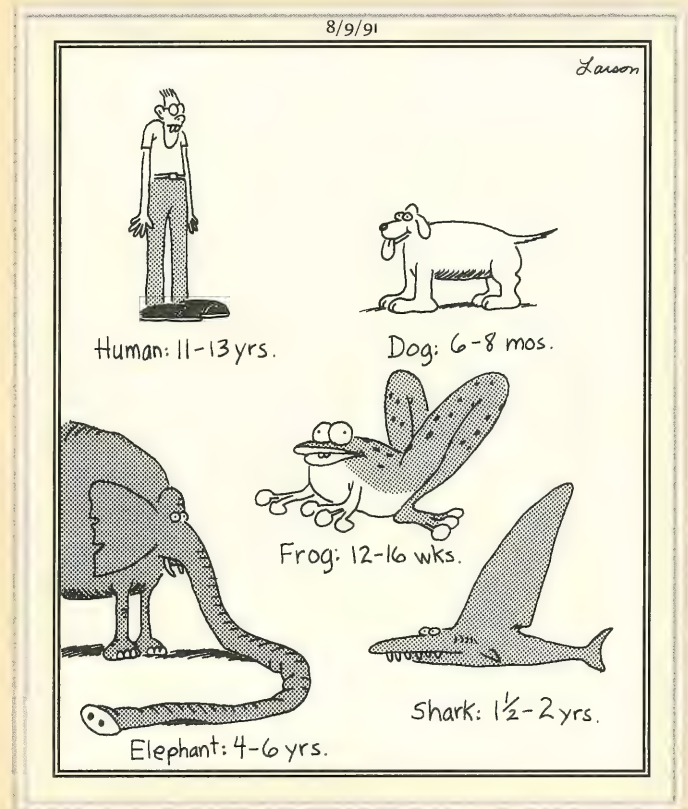
8/12/91



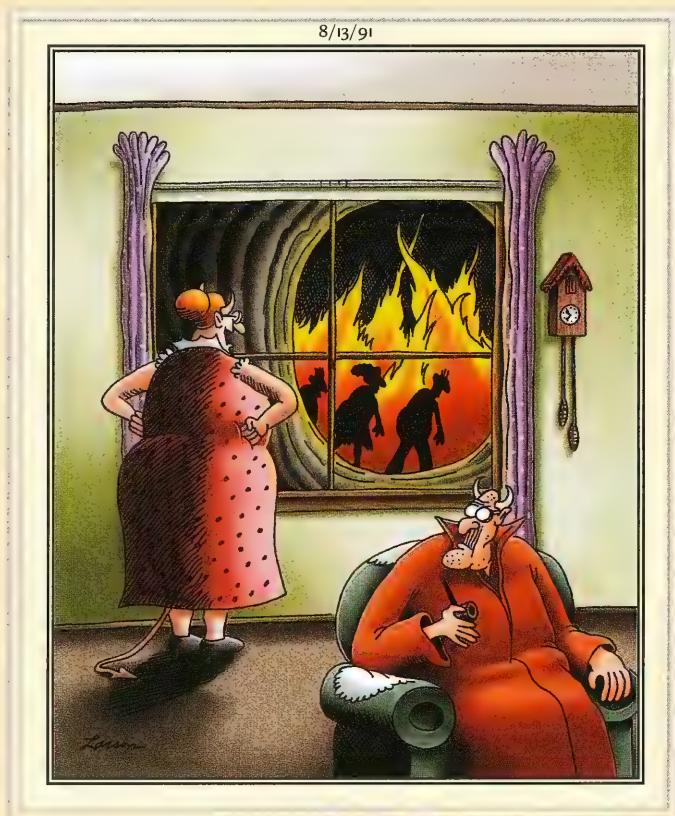
"According to these figures, Simmons, your department has lost another No. 2 Double N—and I want you to find it!"



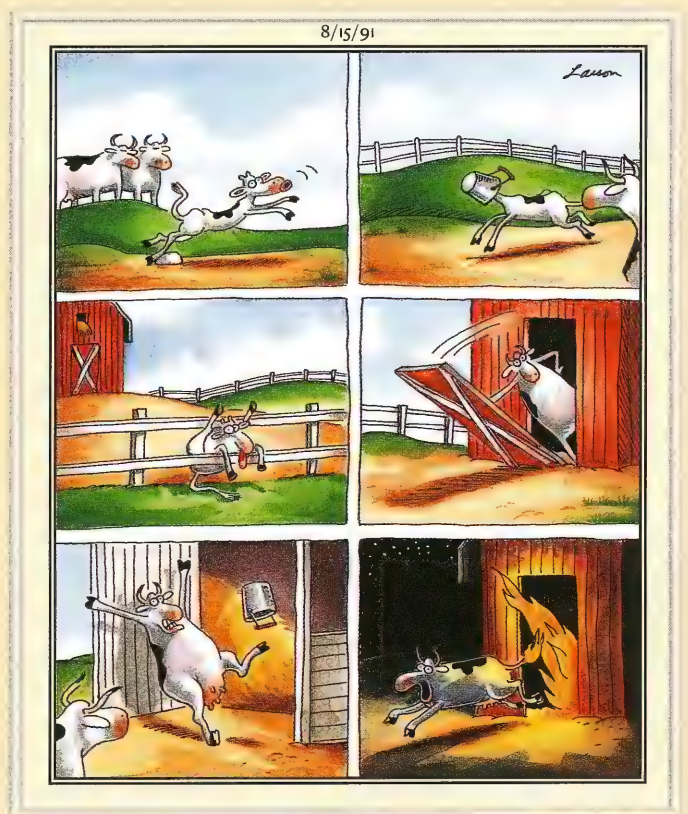
"Bob! There's a fly on your lip! ... There he goes. ... He's back! He's back!"



Awkward ages

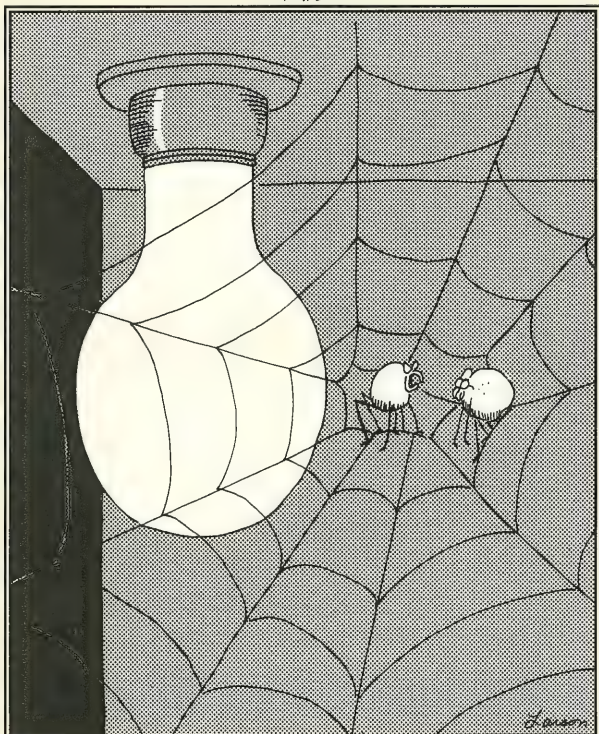


"Looks like another hot one, Pa."



The life and times of Lulu,
Mrs. O'Leary's ill-fated cow

8/14/91



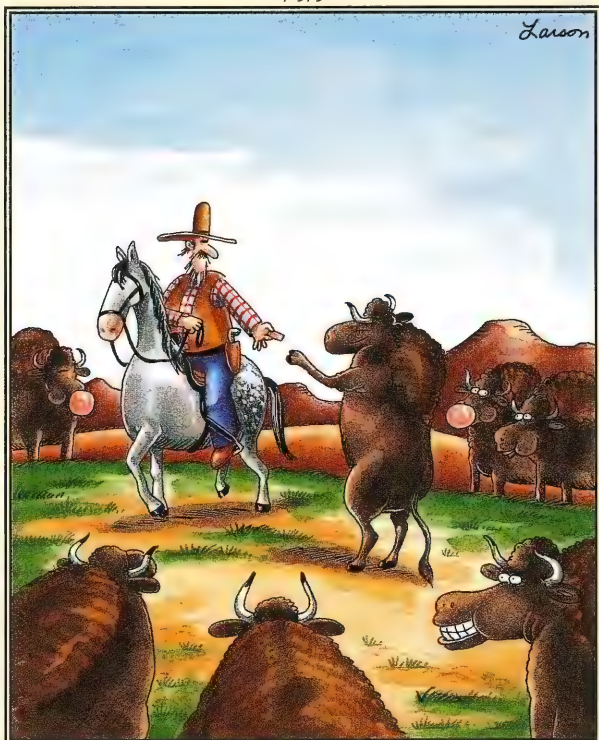
"Crimony! Every night you ask me what's for dinner and every night I say the same thing: 'Moths, moths, *moths!*'"

8/20/91



"And here he is, the author of the exciting autobiography, *Shoe!*"

8/19/91



The herd moved in around him, but Zach had known better than to approach these animals without his trusty buffalo gum.

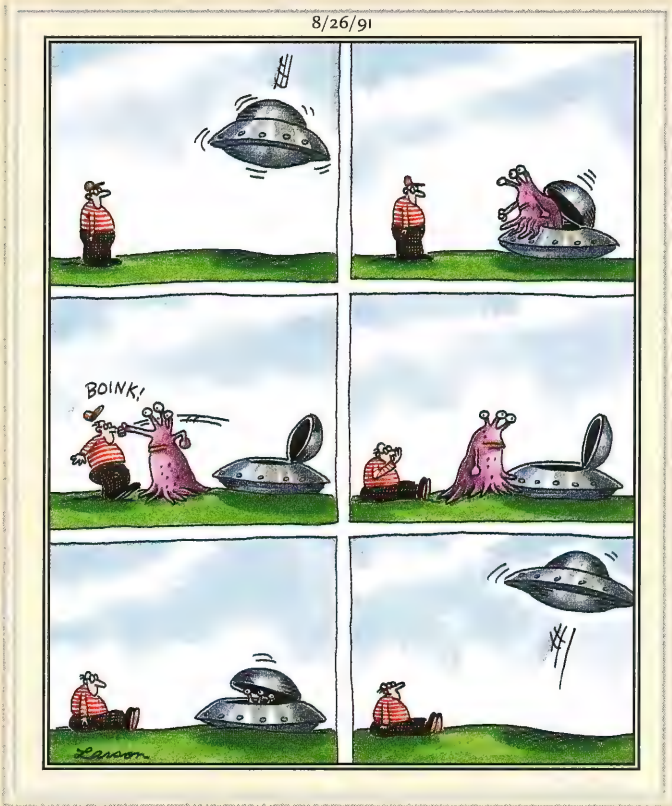
8/21/91



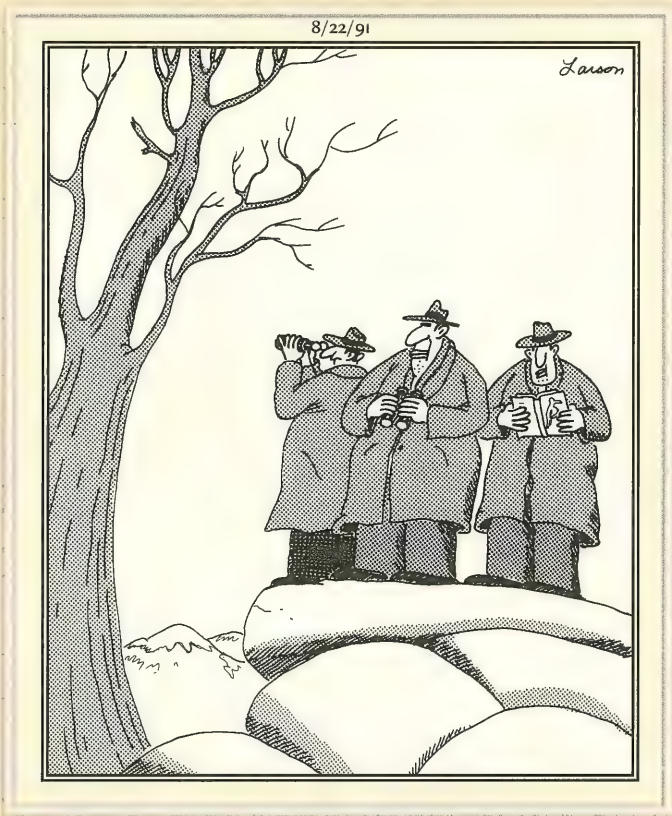
Unwittingly, Raymond wanders into the hive's company picnic.



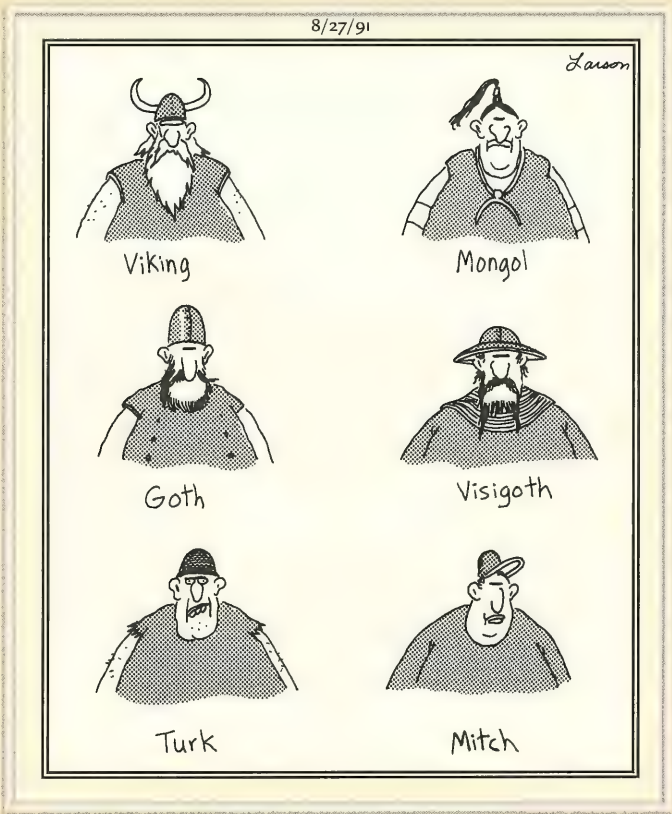
“Oh, great! Now there goes my hat!”



Henry never knew what hit him.



Boid watching



Know your barbarians.

8/28/91



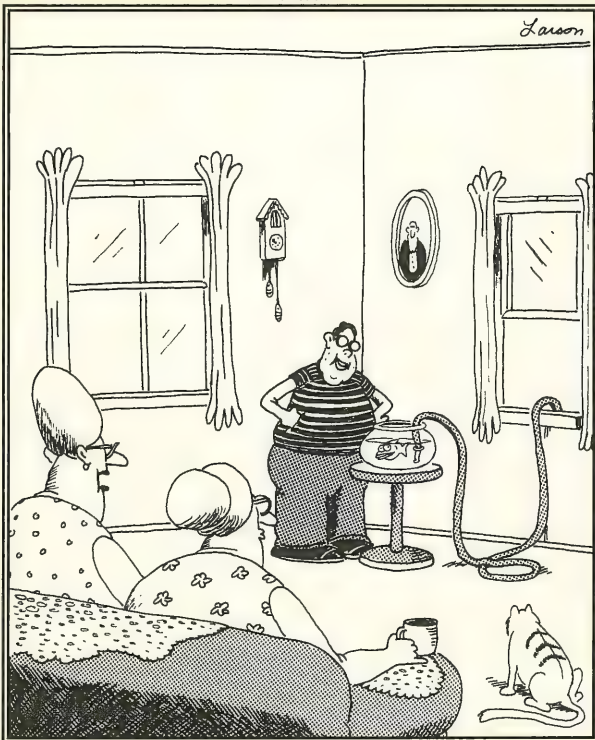
How poodles first came to North America

8/29/91



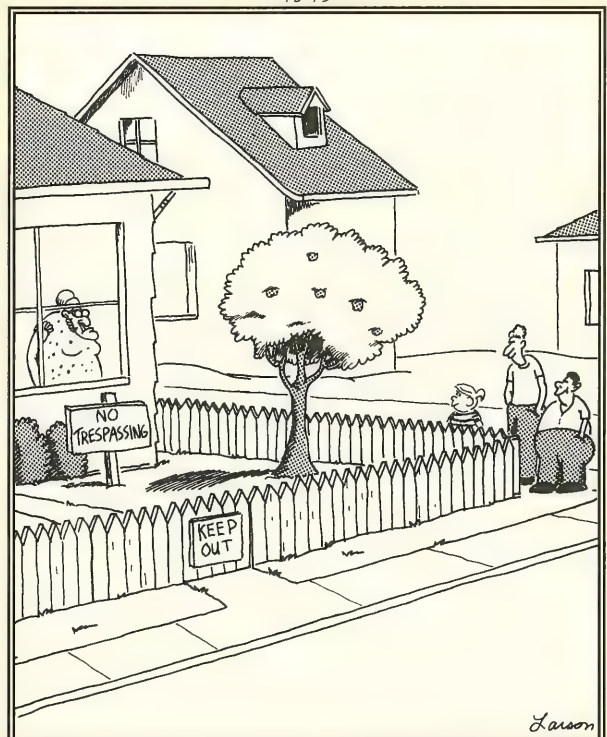
Fortunately for Sparky, Zeke knew the famous "Rex maneuver."

8/23/91



"Oh, there goes Lenny again—draining off the goldfish bowl. ... He wants to one day work for the Army Corps of Engineers, you know."

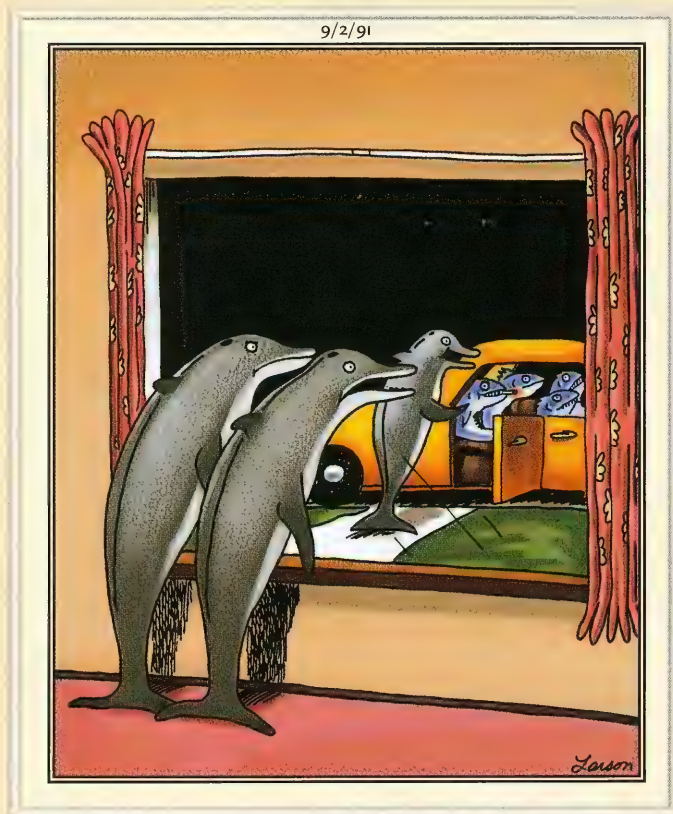
8/30/91



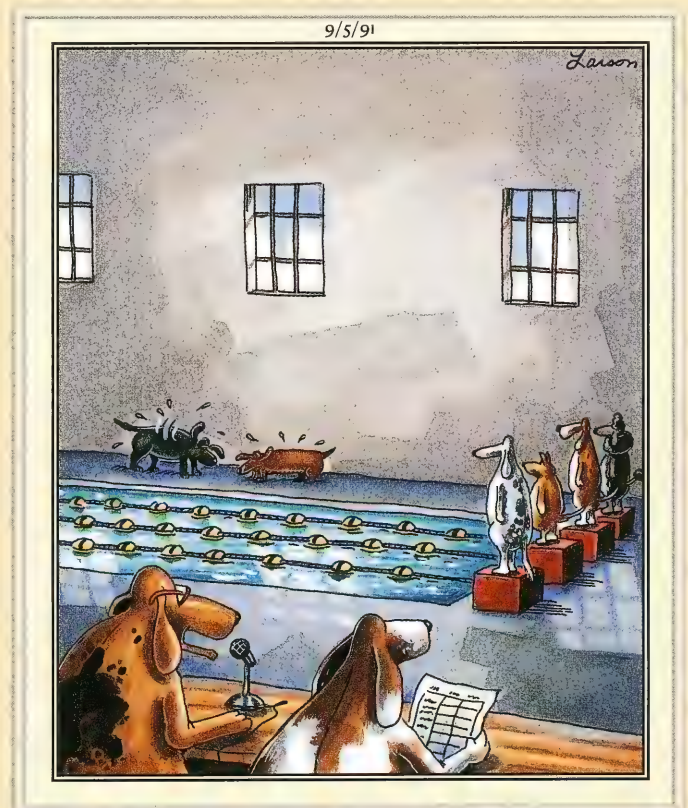
Mrs. MacIntyer smelled trouble. On one side of the fence was her fruit-laden apple tree; on the other was the neighborhood brat pack of Dennis the Menace, Eddie Haskell, and Damien II.



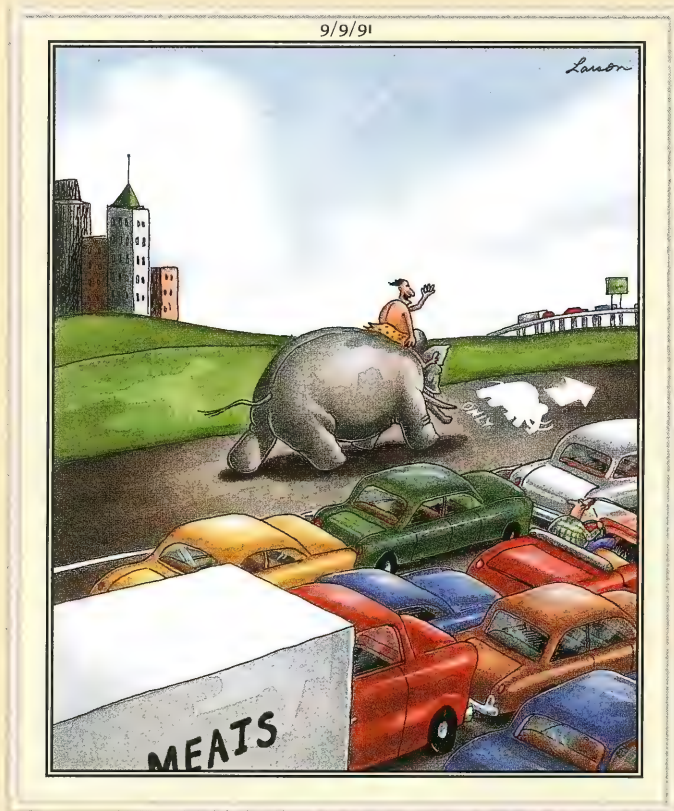
"Oh my God, Rogers! ... Is that? ... Is that? ... It is!
It's the MUMMY'S PURSE!"



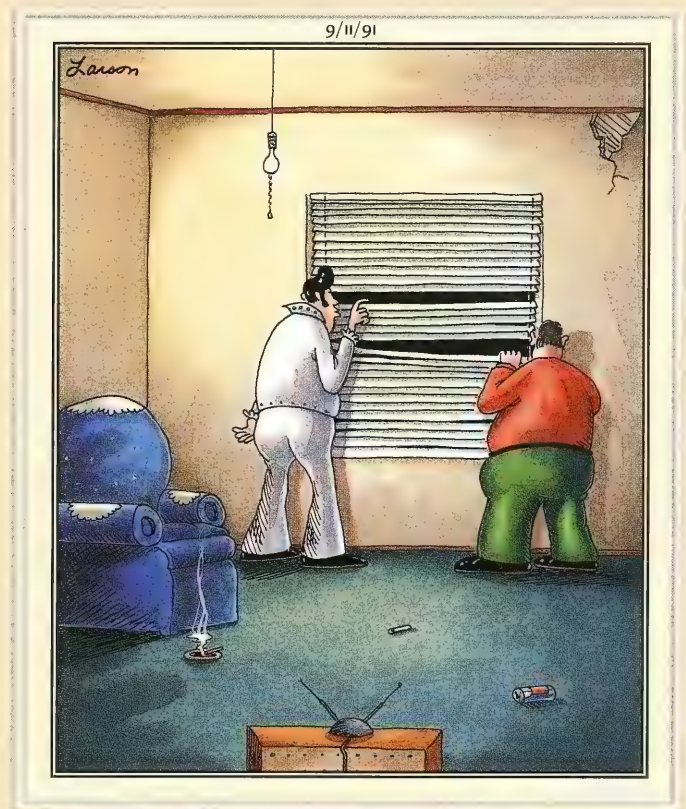
"Well, there he goes again. ... I suppose I shouldn't worry, but I just get a bad feeling about Jimmy hanging out with those tuna punks."



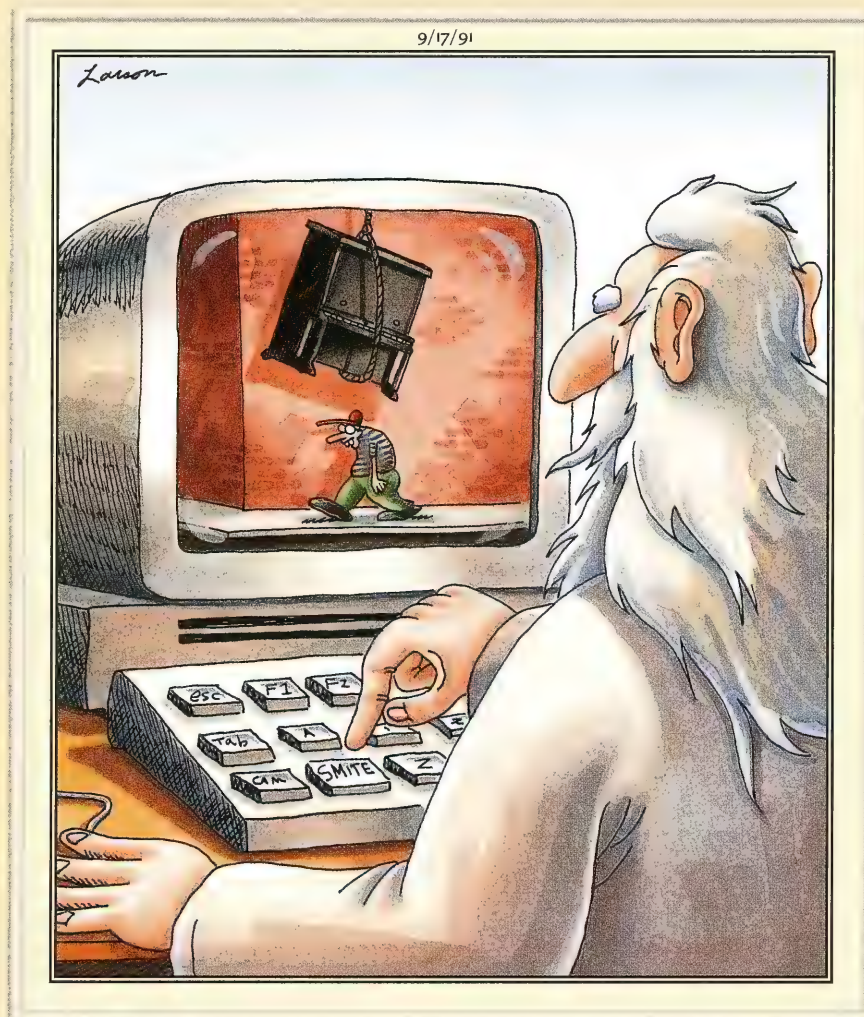
"Well, we're ready for the males' 100-meter freestyle, and I think we can rest assured that most of these athletes will select the dog paddle."



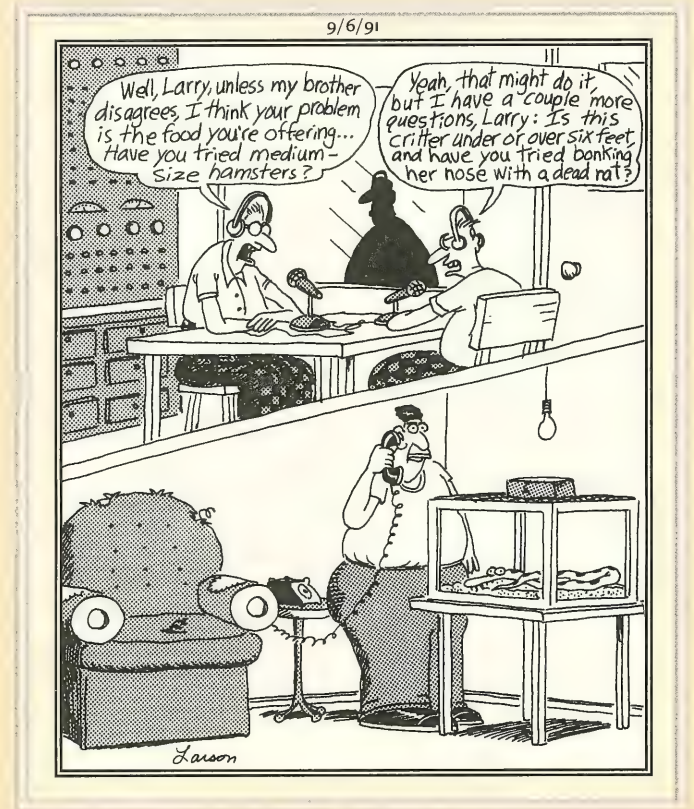
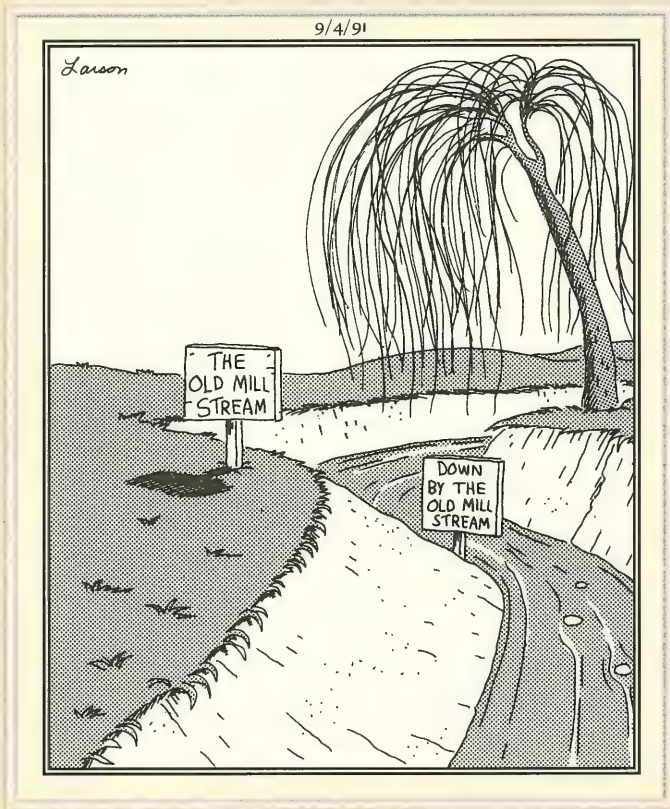
Special commuter lanes



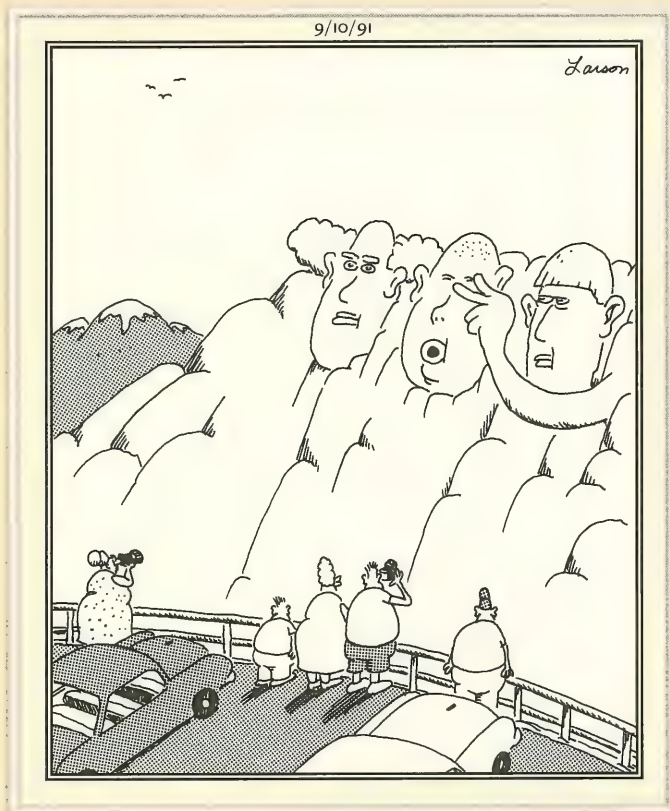
Roommates Elvis and Salman Rushdie sneak a quick look at the outside world.



God at His computer



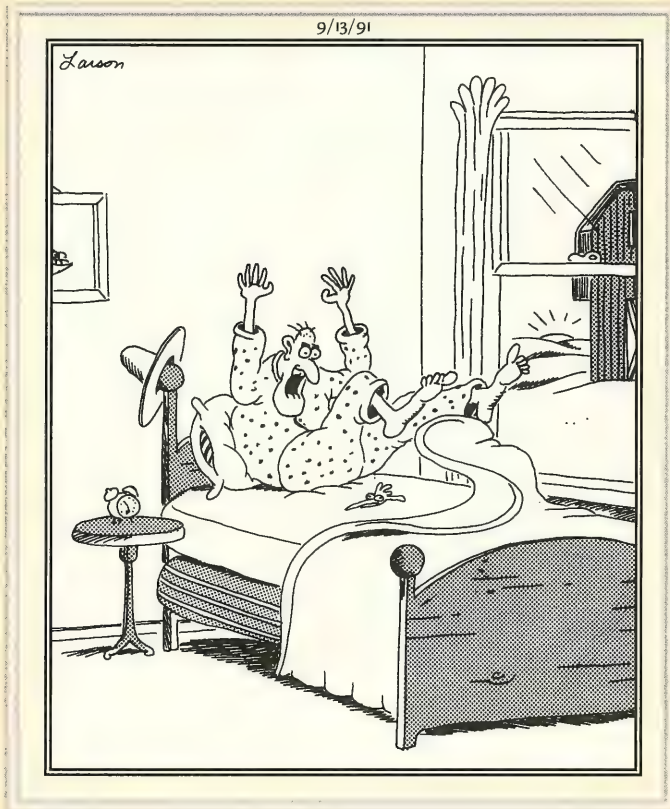
On the air with *Snake Talk*



At Mount Stoogemore



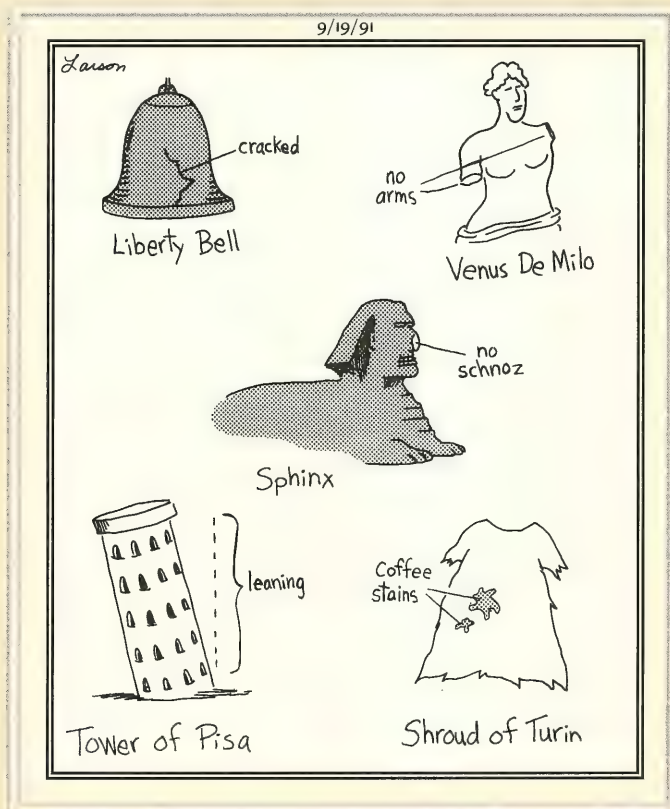
In its typical defensive behavior, the arctic clown remained motionless and concealed, betrayed only by its nose.



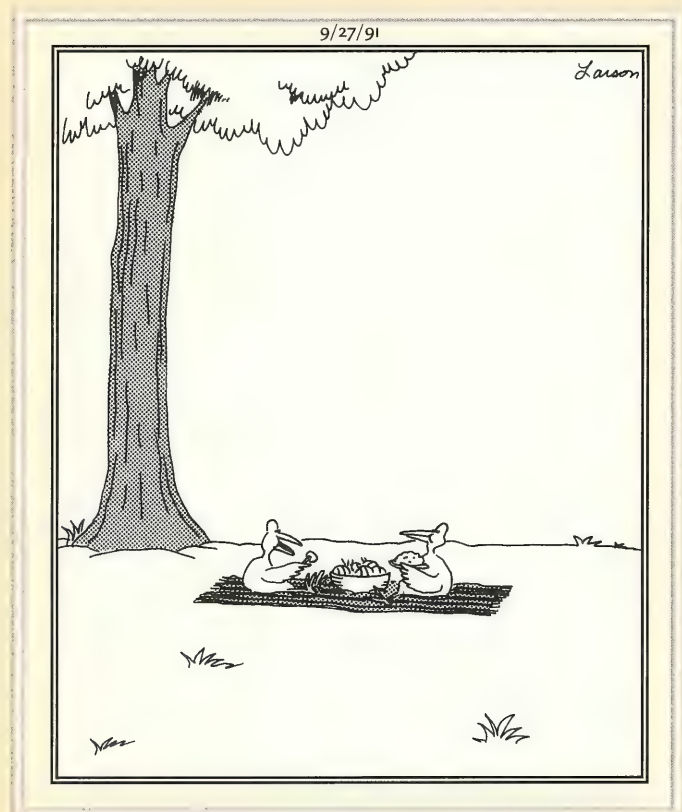
The farmers' Mafia sends Henry a message.



The art of conversation

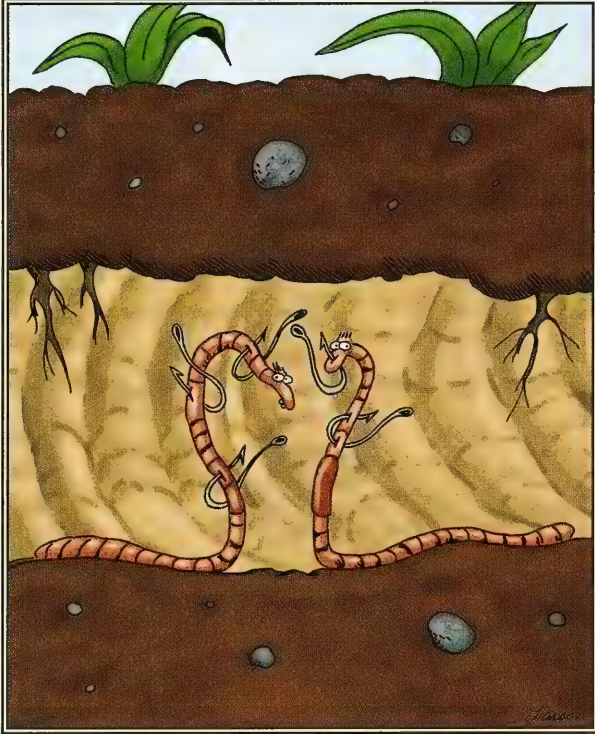


Flawed cultural treasures



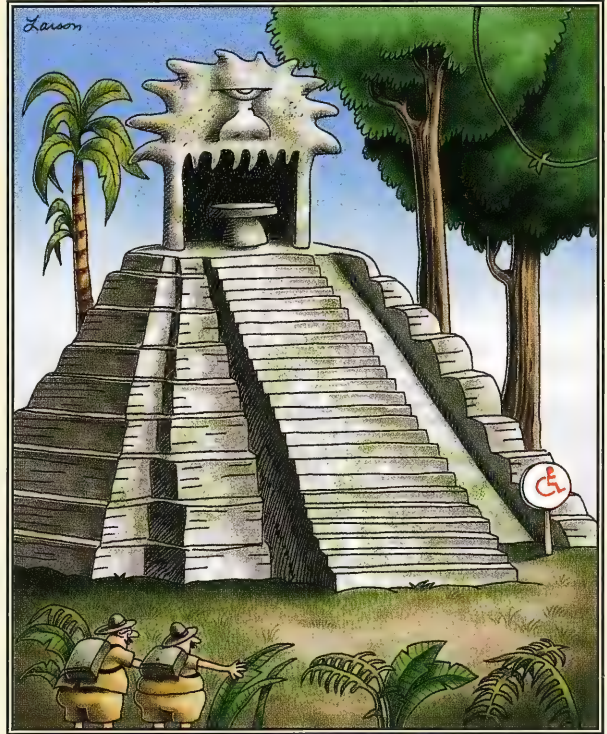
"Boy, that's good. But it's interesting, Bob. ... Do you think everybody's mother makes a different kind of potato bug salad?"

9/18/91



Punk worms

9/23/91



August 11, 1959: In the heart of the Bolivian jungle, archaeologists stumble upon an ancient and heretofore unknown sacrificial altar.

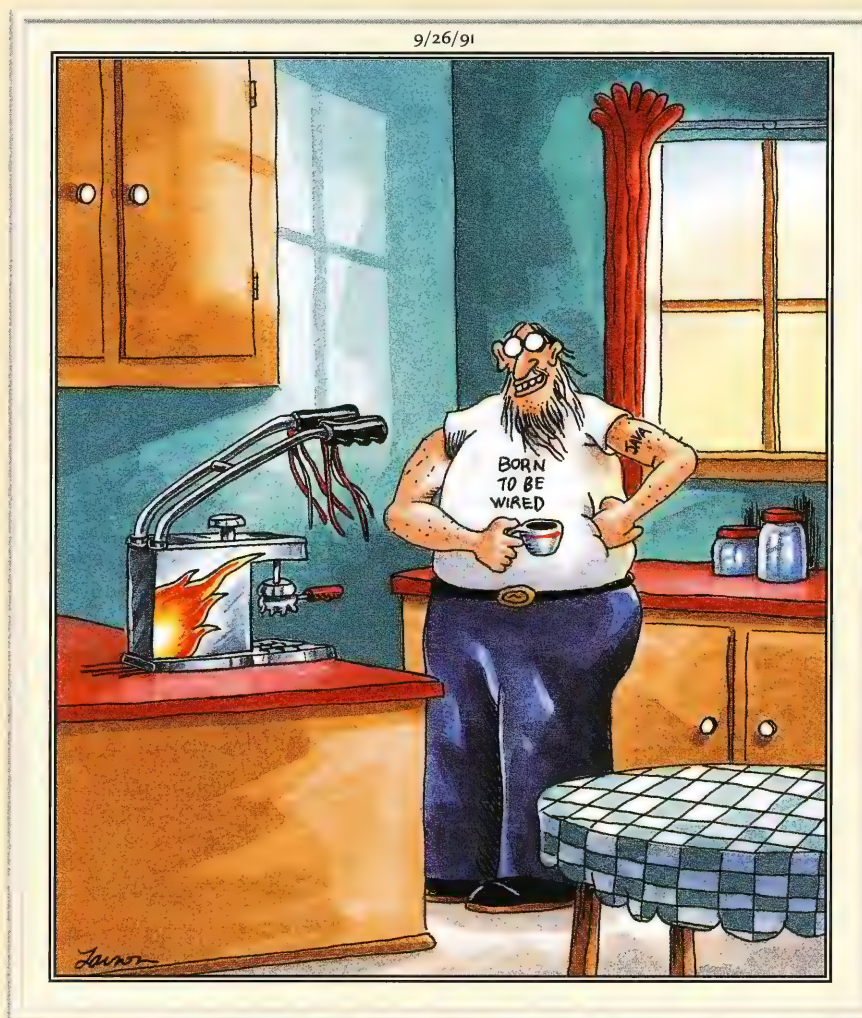
9/20/91



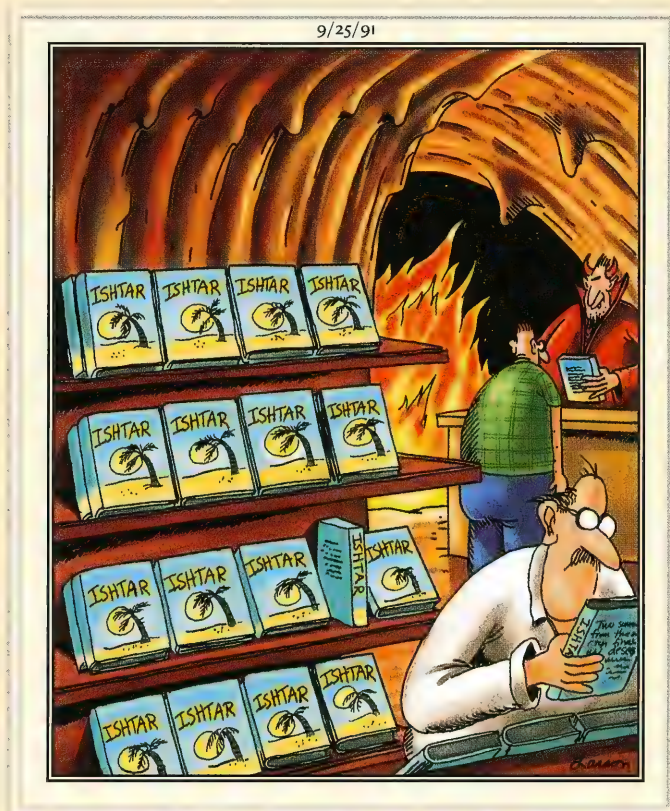
9/24/91



"Whoa! Mr. Lewis! We don't know what that thing is or where it came from, but after what happened to the dog last week, we advise people not to touch it."



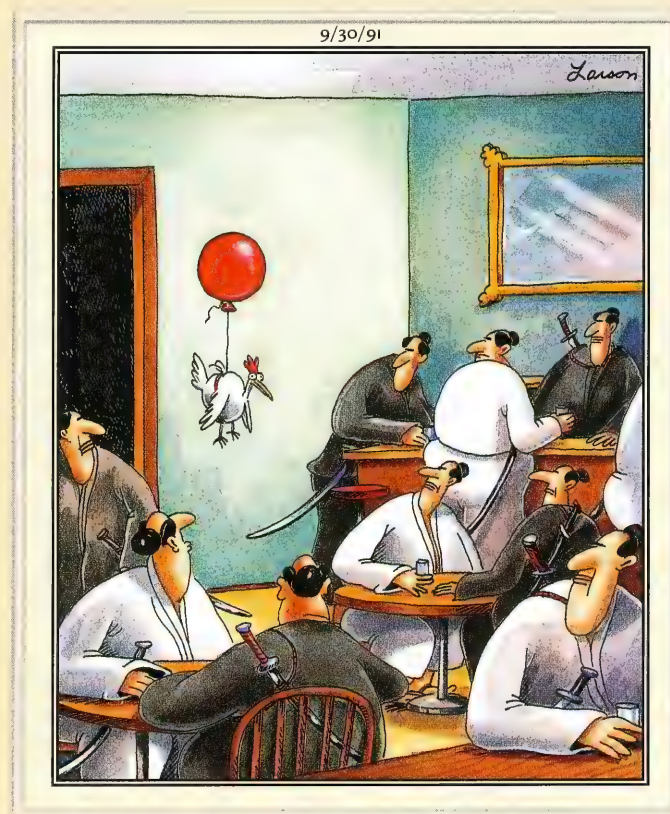
Carl "Javahead" Jones and his chopped espresso maker



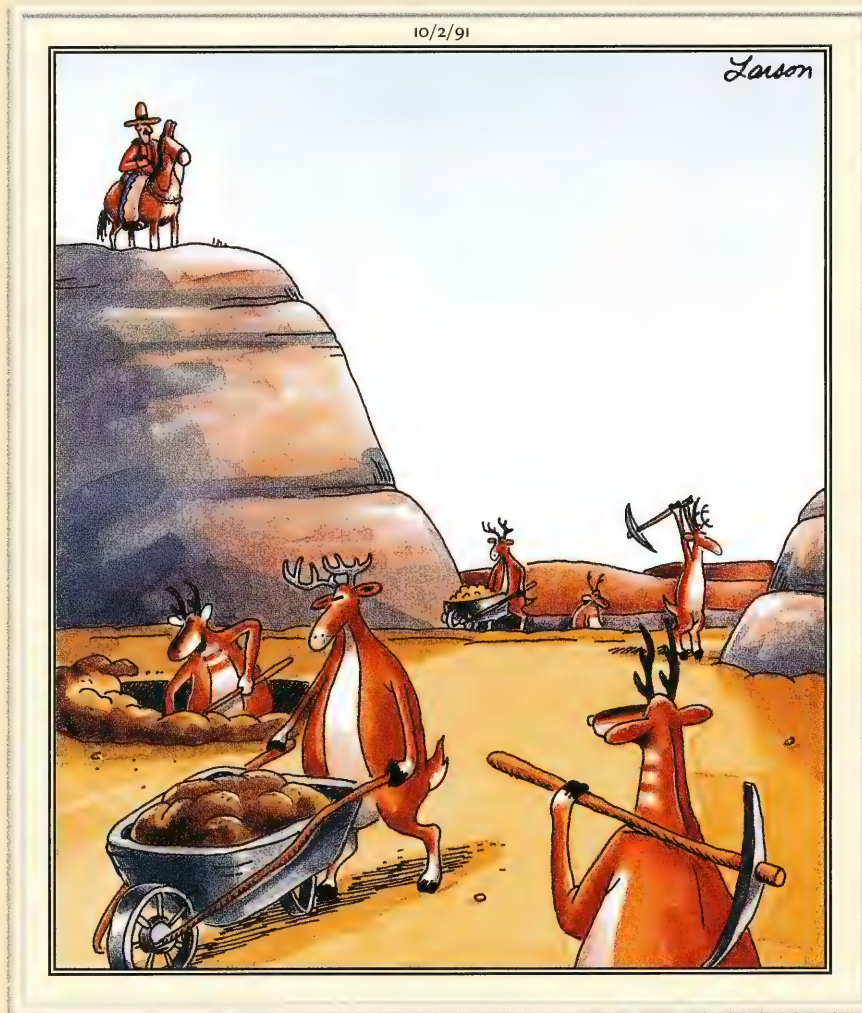
Hell's video store

To whom it may concern:
When I drew the above cartoon, I had not actually seen *Ishtar*. I only knew, or sensed, that it had entered the film industry lexicon as a major turkey. Years later, I saw it on an airplane, and was stunned at what was happening to me: I was being entertained. Sure, maybe it's not the greatest film ever made, but my cartoon was way off the mark. There are so many cartoons for which I should probably write an apology, but this is the only one that compels me to do so.

—Gary Larson



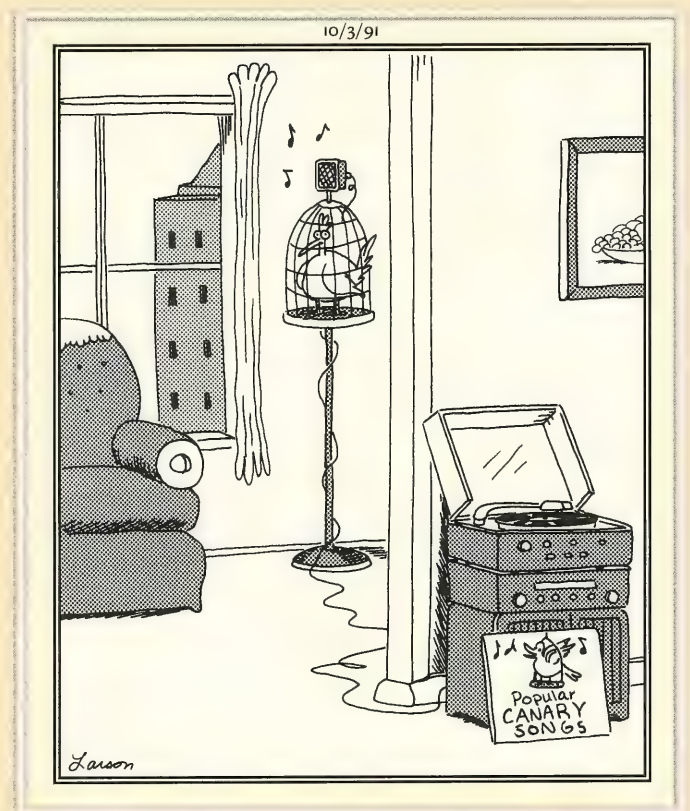
In what was destined to be a short-lived spectacle, a chicken, suspended by a balloon, floated through the samurai bar's doorway.

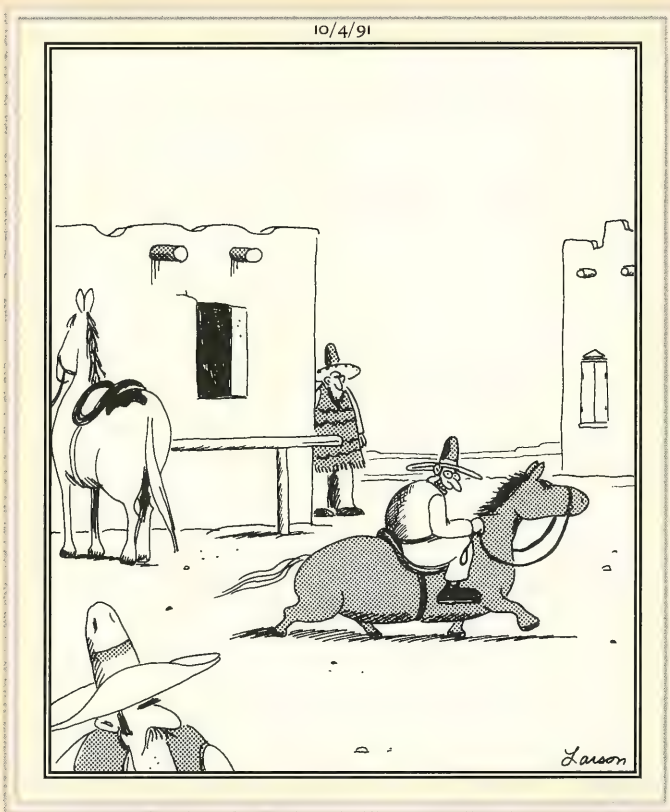


Where the deer and the antelope work

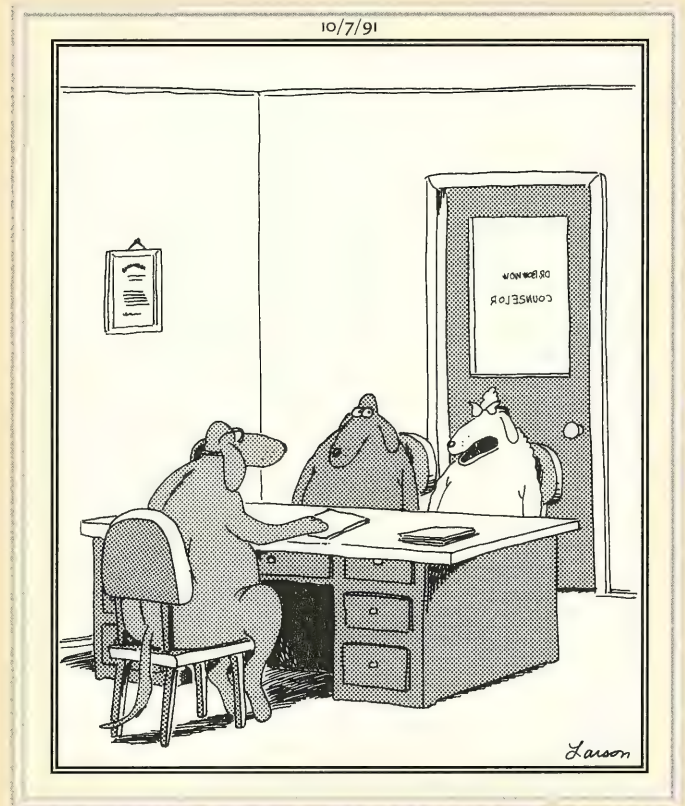


Omens and their meanings

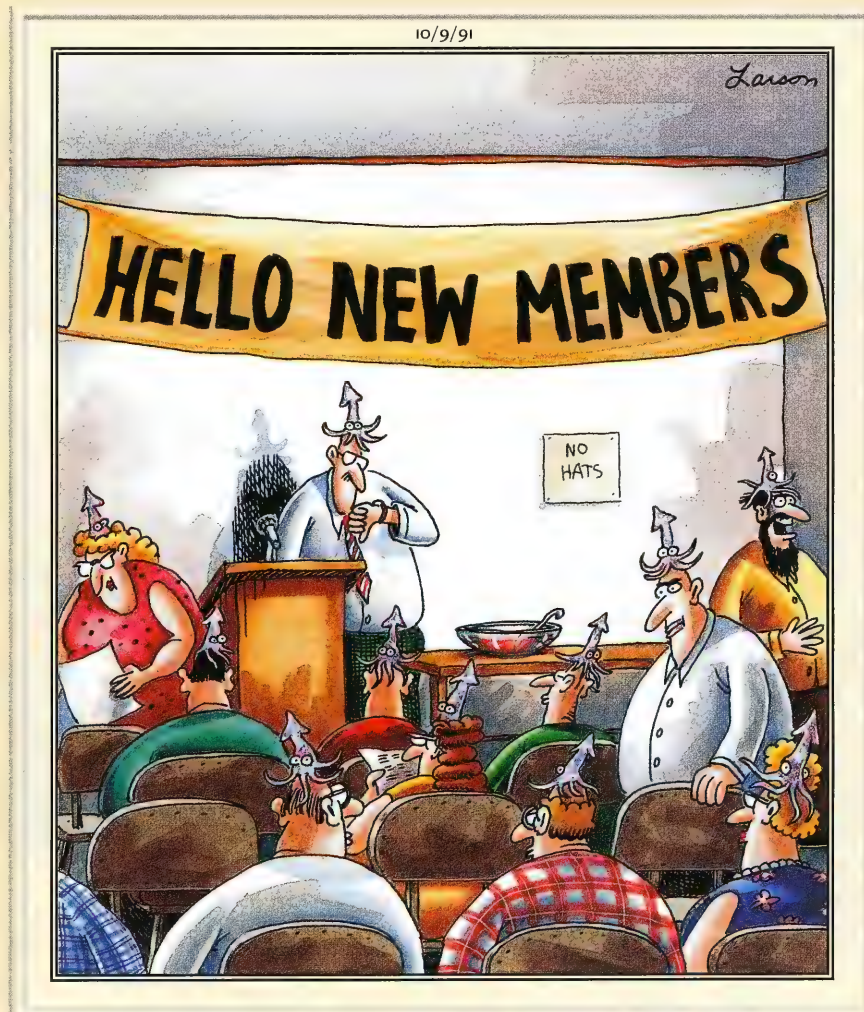




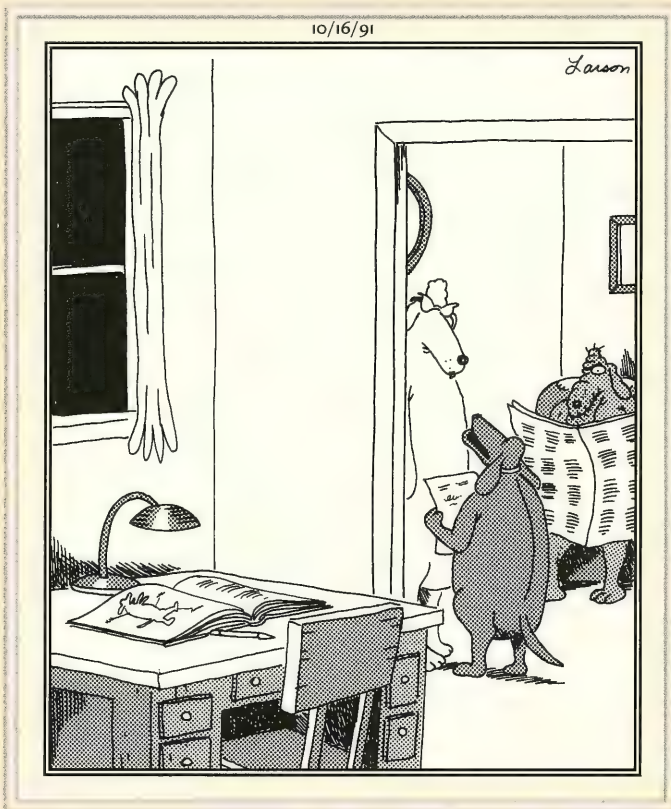
Durango, Mexico, circa 1880: Juan Sanchez cruises through town on the first low-rider.



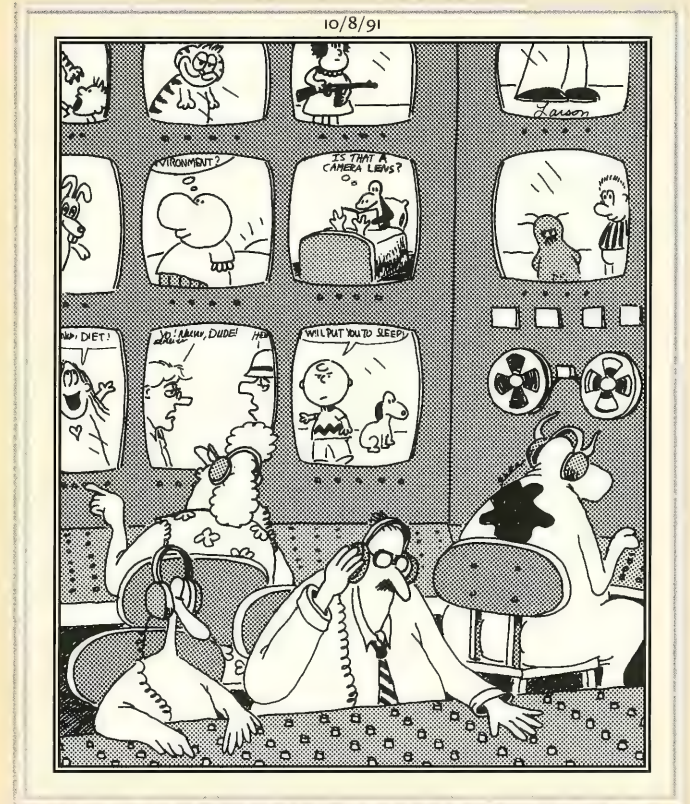
"You should hear him! ... First he growls and snarls at me and *then* he thinks he can make everything okay by scratching me behind the ears."



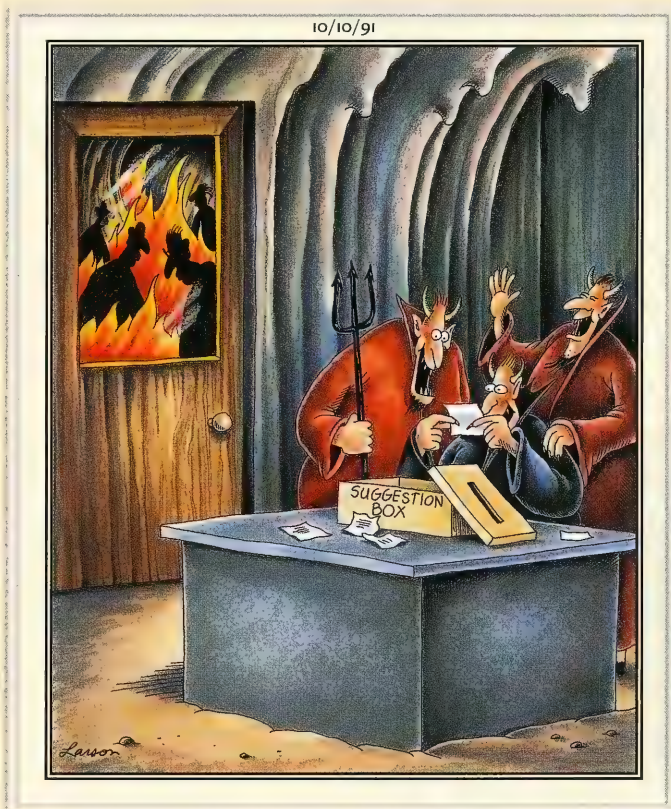
At the monthly meeting of Squidheads Anonymous



"You gotta help me, Mom. ... This assignment is due tomorrow, and Gramps doesn't understand the new tricks."



At *The Far Side's* spy center



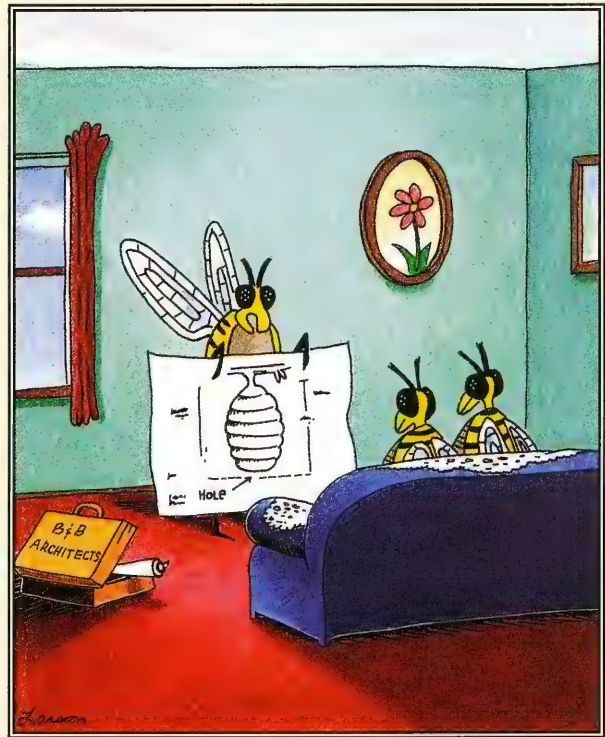
"Okay, crybaby! You want the last soda? Well, let me GET IT READY FOR YOU!"

10/11/91



"My marriage is in trouble, Barbara. You ever tried communicating with a hammerhead?"

10/15/91



"Voilà! ... Your new dream home! If you like it, I can get a crew mixing wood fibers and saliva as early as tomorrow."

10/17/91

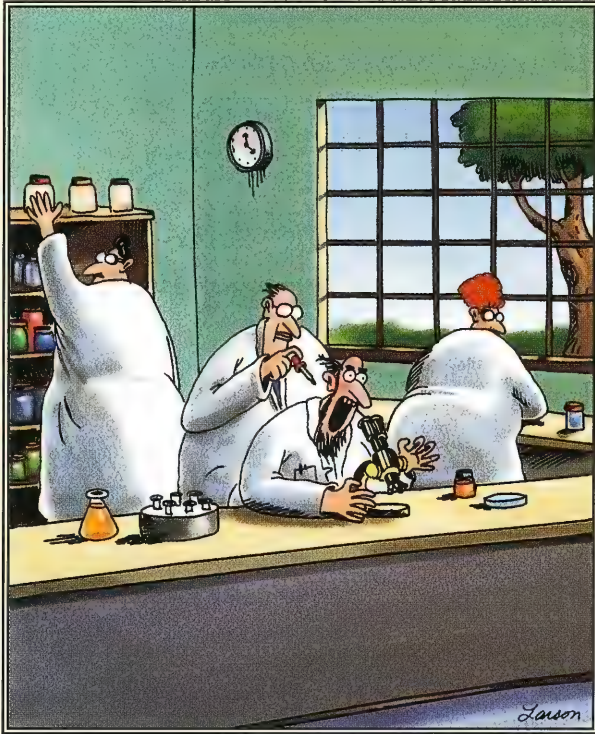


10/21/91



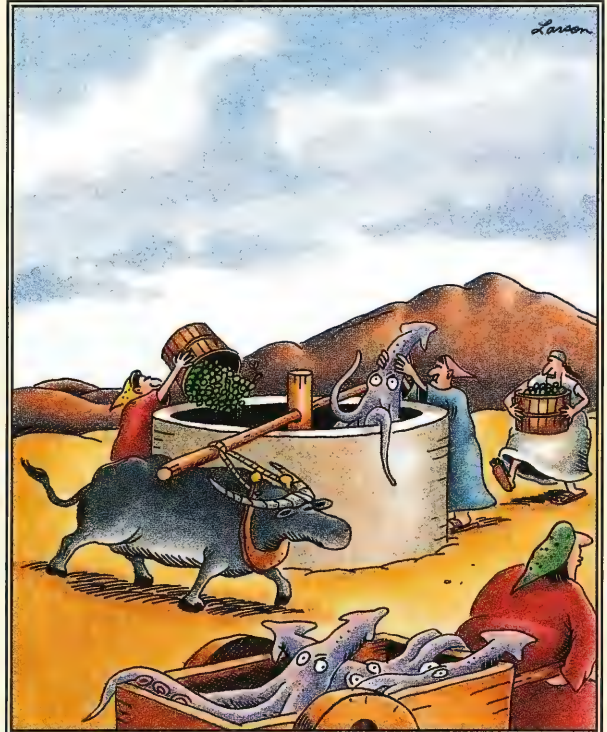
Dog previews

10/18/91



Professor Glickman, the lab practical joker, deftly places a single drop of hydrochloric acid on the back of Professor Bingham's neck.

10/24/91

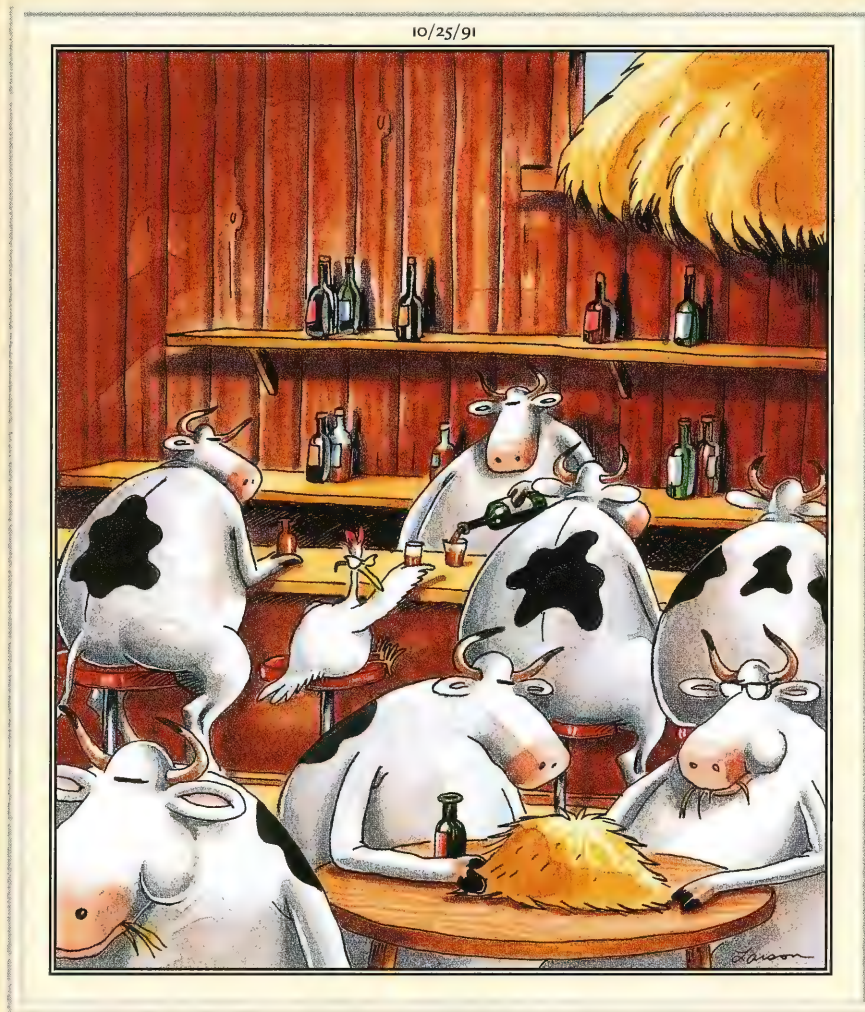


Where we get calamari blanc

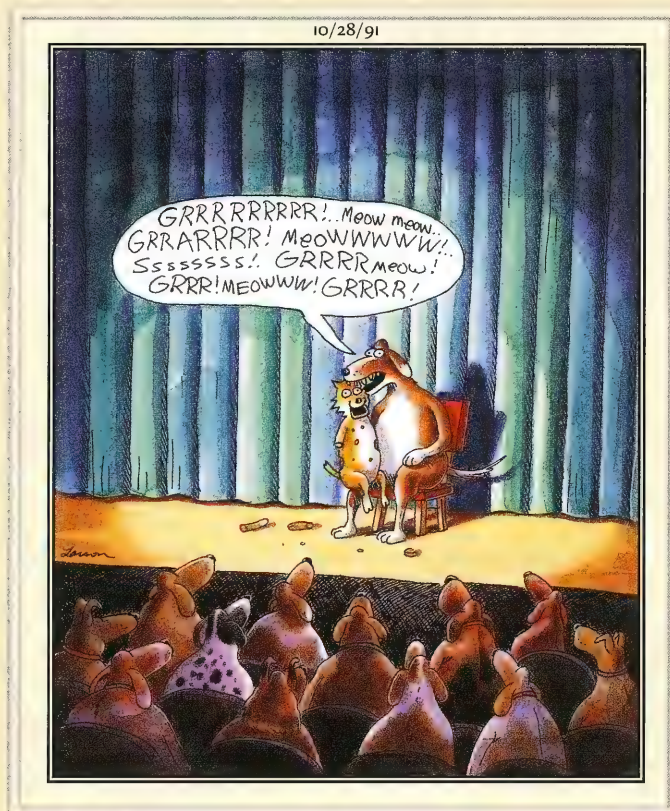
10/22/91



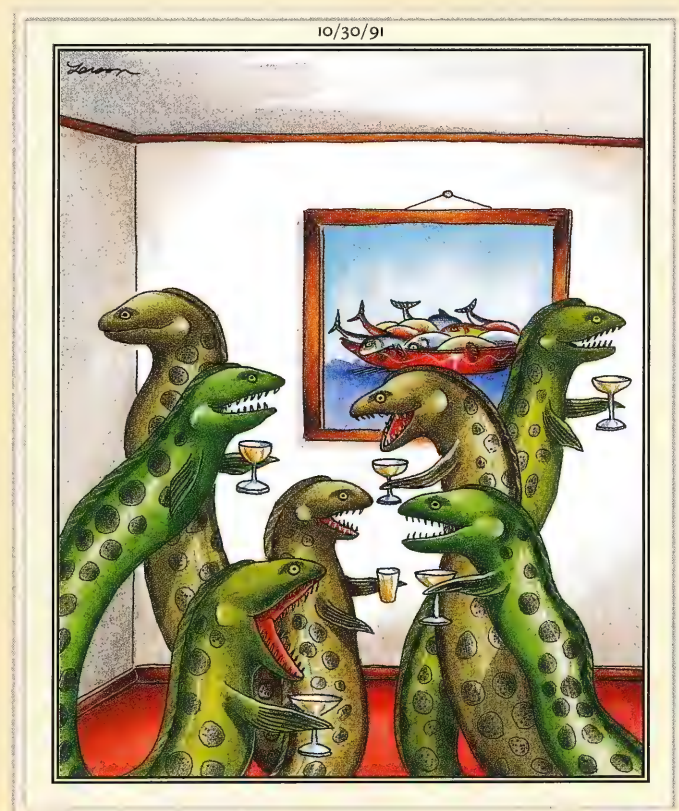
Three more careers are claimed by the Bermuda Triangle of jazz.



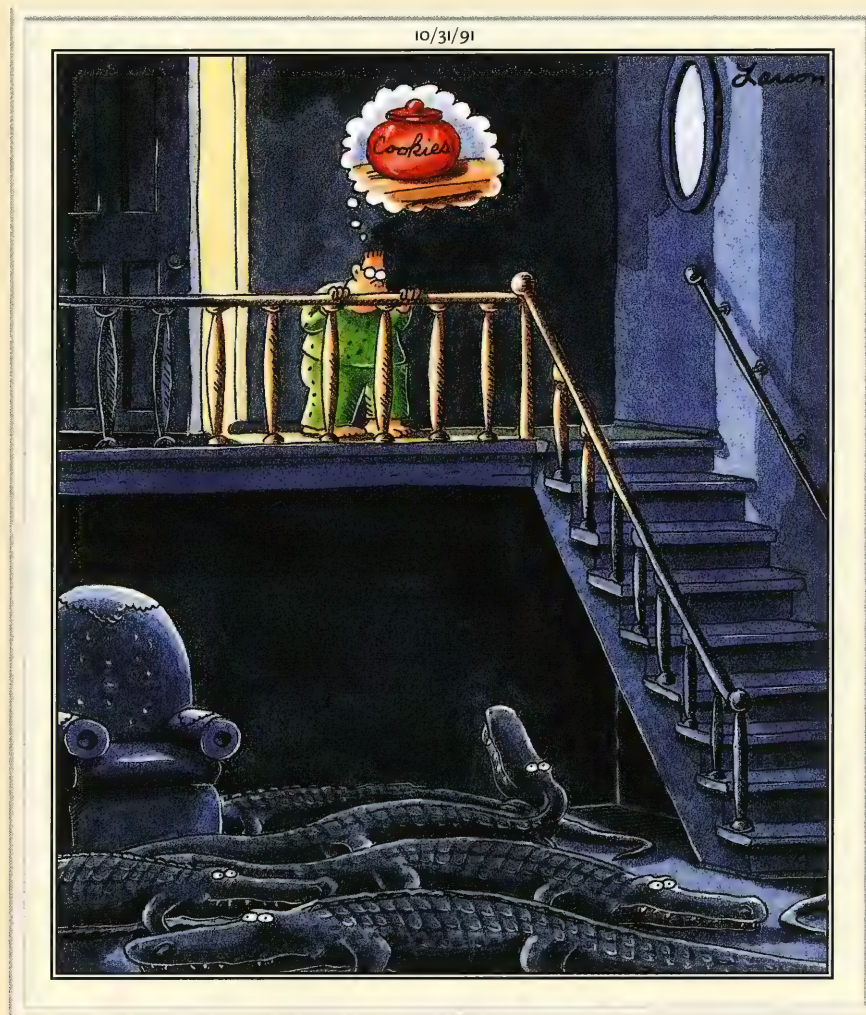
Vera looked around the room. Not another chicken anywhere. And then it struck her—this was a hay bar.



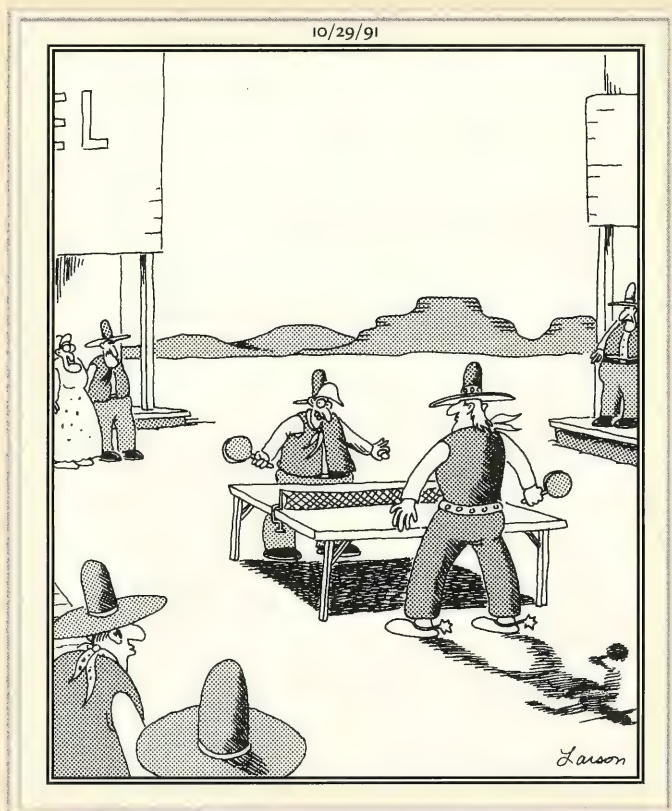
Dog ventriloquists



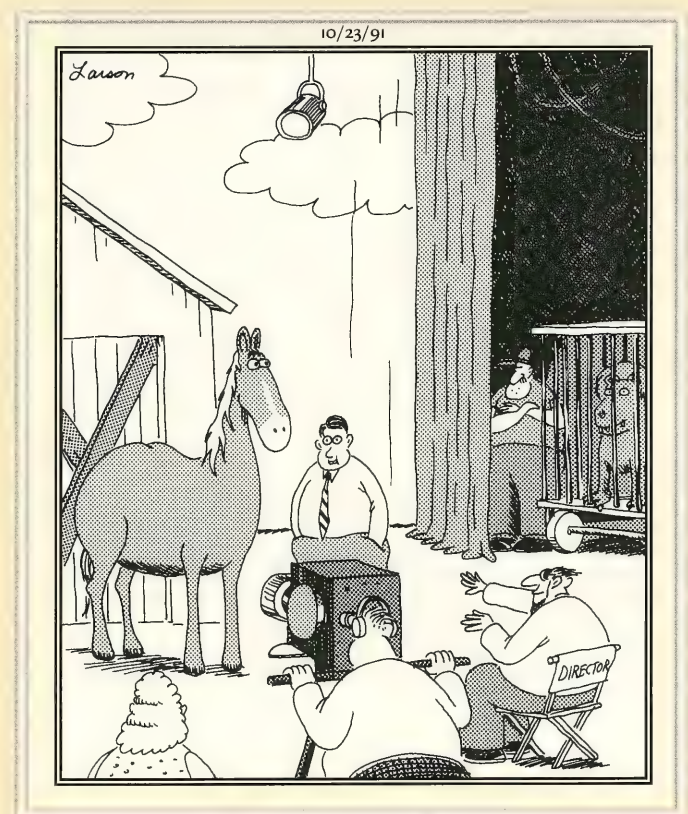
Social morays



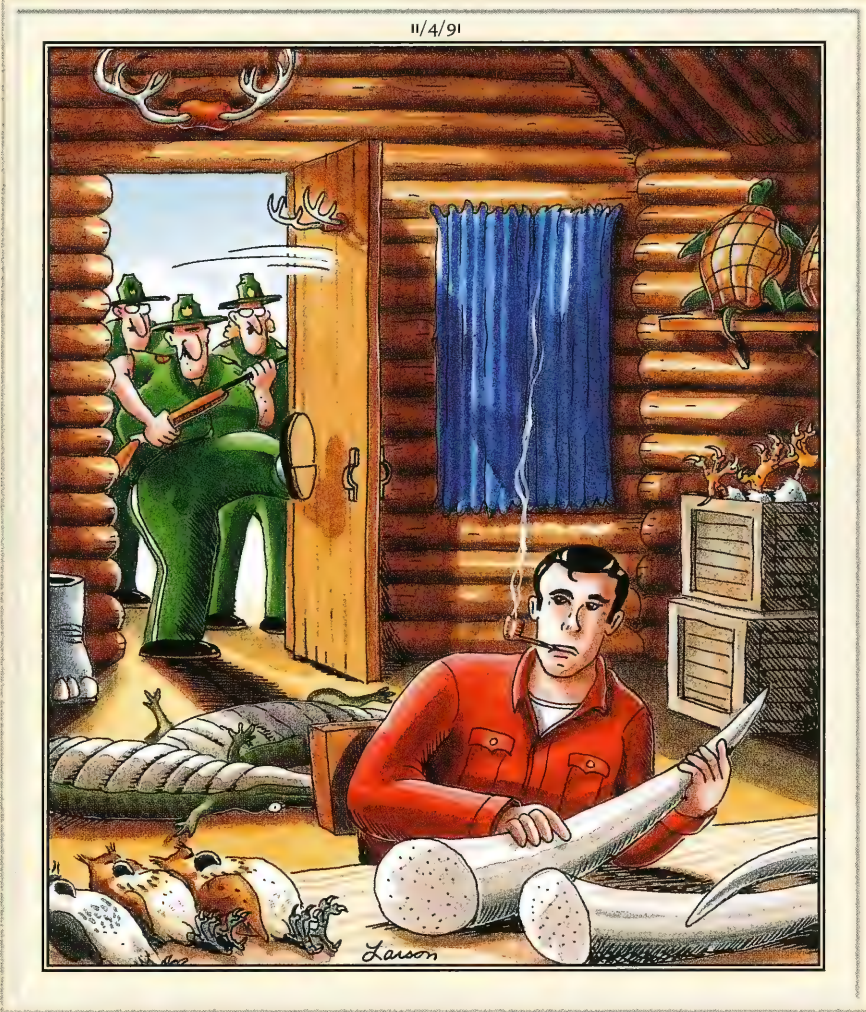
The nightly crisis of Todd's stomach vs. Todd's imagination



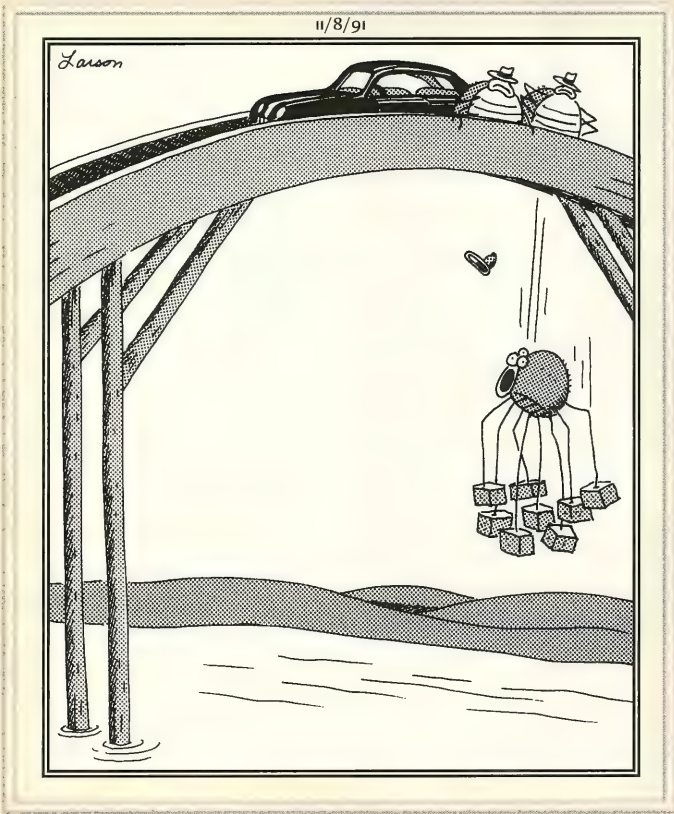
Stumpy didn't know how he got in this situation, but with the whole town watching, he knew he'd have to play it out.



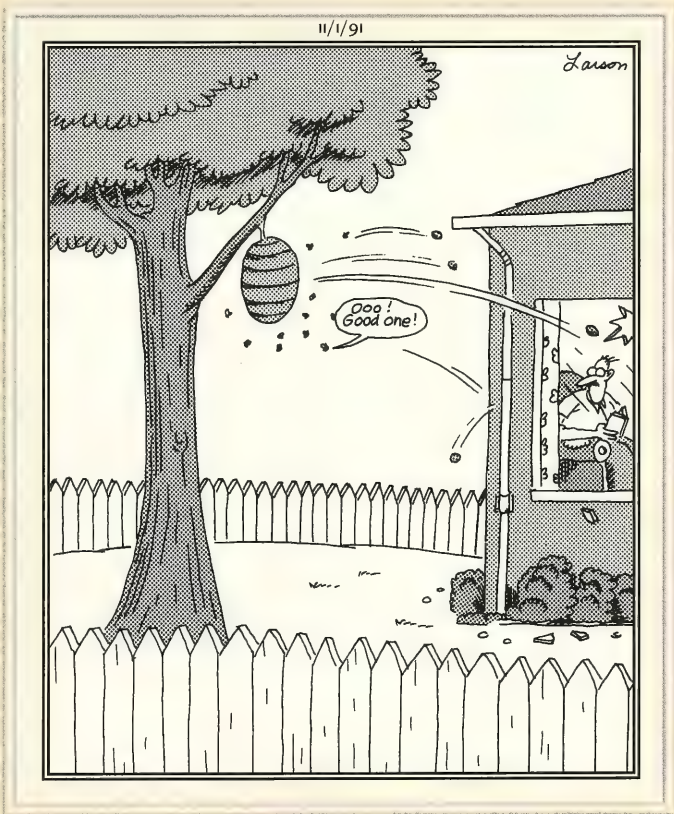
How Mr. Ed was made to talk



Suddenly, Fish and Wildlife agents burst in on Mark Trail's poaching operation.



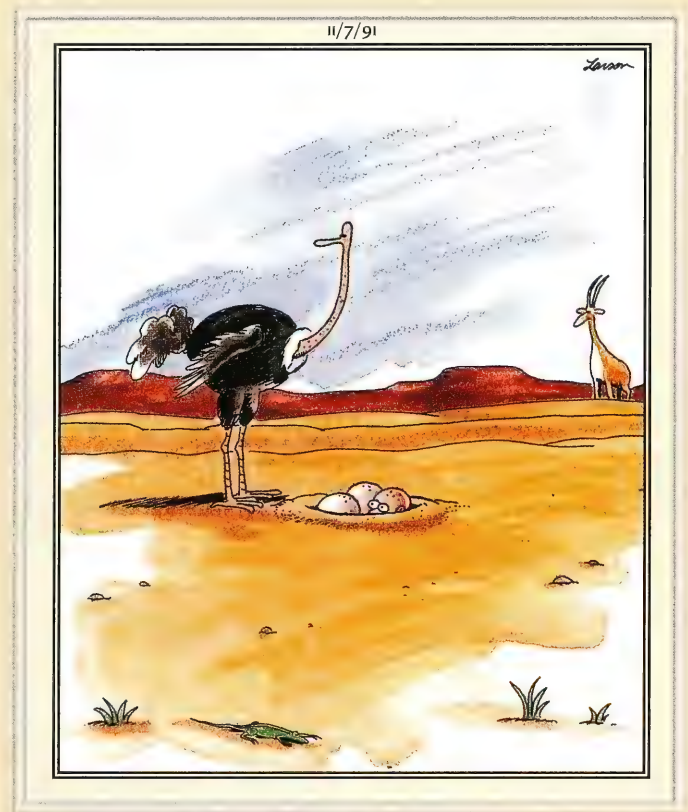
The spider Mafia at work



For many weeks, the two species had lived in mutual tolerance of one another. And then, without provocation, the hornets began throwing rocks at Ned's house.



"Hey! I got news for you, sweetheart! ...
I *am* the lowest form of life on earth!"

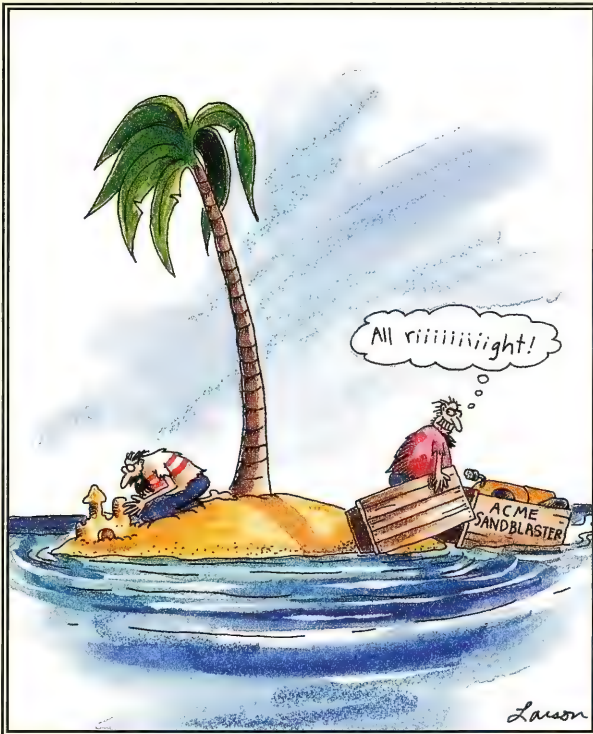


By blending in with the ostrich's eggs,
Hare Krishnas are subsequently raised
by the adult birds.



"Why don't you play some blues, Andrew?"

11/12/91

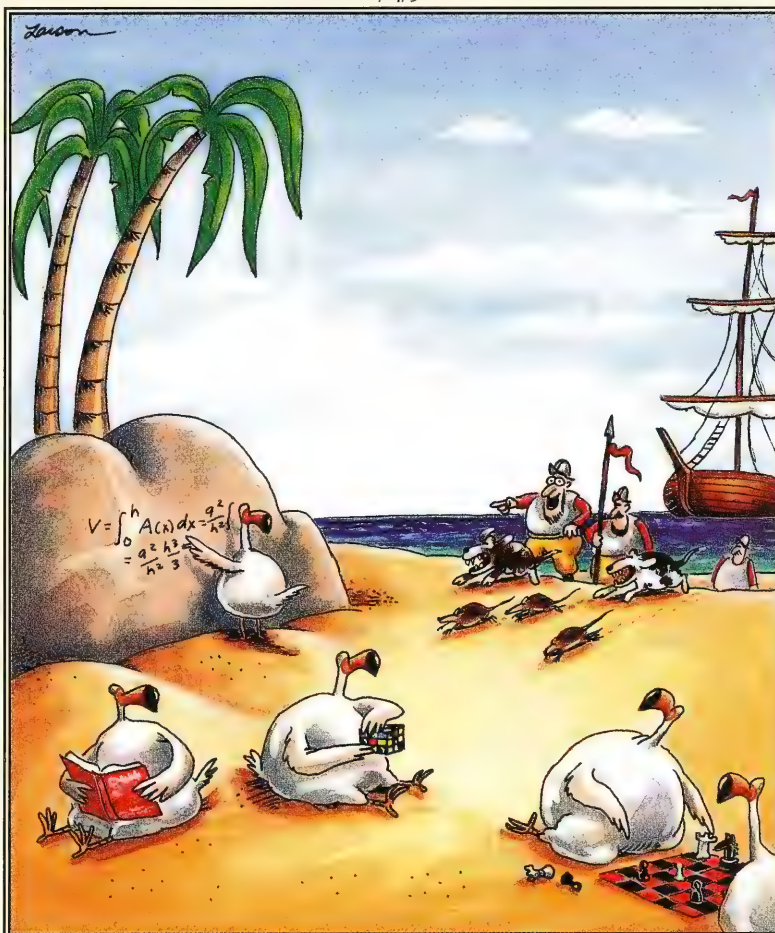


11/15/91



"I lift, you grab. ... Was that concept just a little too complex, Carl?"

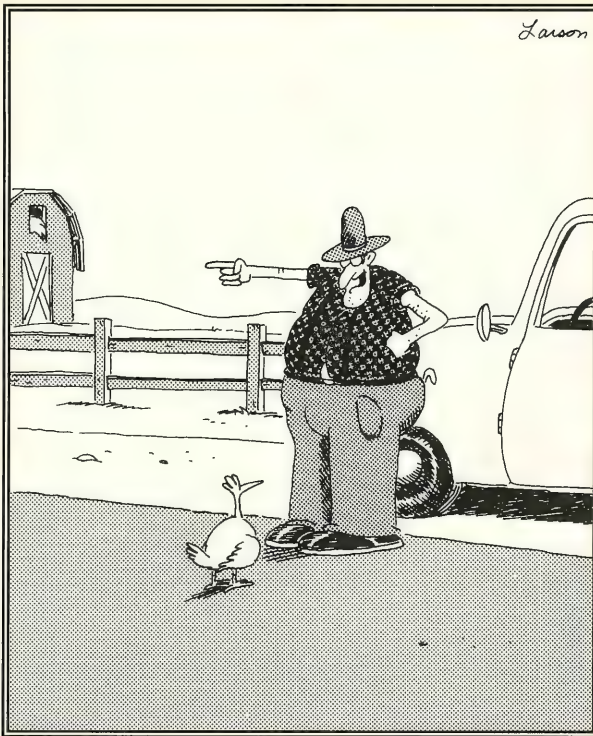
11/14/91



Unbeknownst to most ornithologists, the dodo was actually a very advanced species, living alone quite peacefully until, in the 17th century, it was annihilated by men, rats, and dogs. As usual.

11/11/91

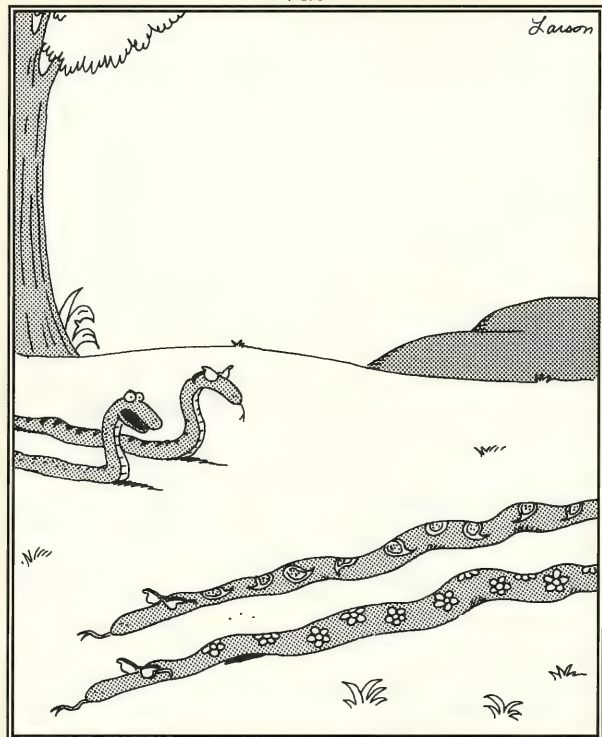
Larson



"Sure. The place you're lookin' for is straight over them hills. 'Course, that's as the crow flies, not as the chicken walks.
Ha ha ha ha!"

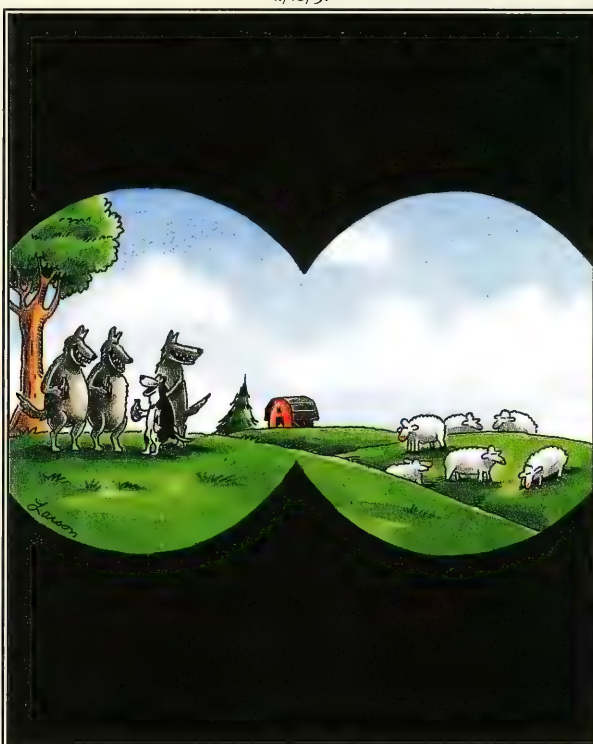
11/13/91

Larson



"Oh my God! ... '60s skins are back!"

11/18/91



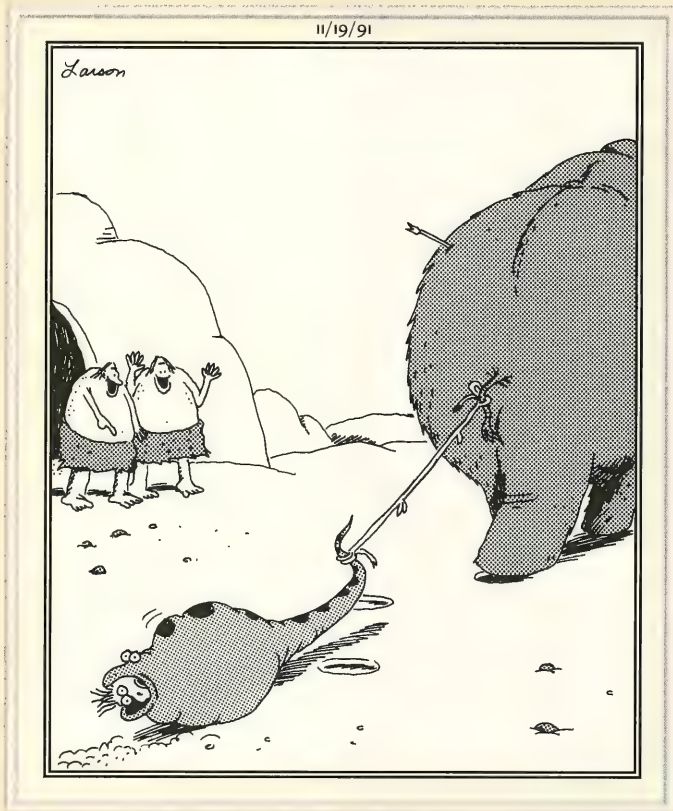
Everything was starting to come into focus for Farmer MacDougal—his missing sheep, his missing beer, and his collie, Shep, who was getting just a little too sociable for his own good.

11/20/91

Larson



Why we see news anchorpersons only from the waist up.



Practical jokes of the Paleolithic

To Whom it may Concern,

Help!
Normally I have no problems
with understanding the Far Side.
Yet the following has Stumped
Not only me But the ENTIRE
office. Please Translate or at
least give me a Clue.
My home phone [REDACTED]

or return address letter

Sincerely Confused,
[REDACTED]

UNIVERSAL
PRESS
SYNDICATE

4800 Main Street • Kansas City, Missouri 64112 • 816/832-8800

April 26, 1994

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]

Gary Larson passed along to me your letter asking about a
FAR SIDE cartoon in his Off-the-Wall calendar.

The panel you didn't understand is a twist on the putting-a-
man-in-his-place joke. The two cavemen in the background
have pulled a practical joke on the third caveman. Somehow
the two men put the third into the snake, and then tied the
snake to the mammoth's tail. They then must have angered the
mammoth by sticking a spear in its hide, which caused the
mammoth to take the caveman on a very bumpy ride.

The situation is not unlike someone putting a smart aleck
into a car trunk and taking him on a joyride. But this
cartoon takes place thousands of years ago.

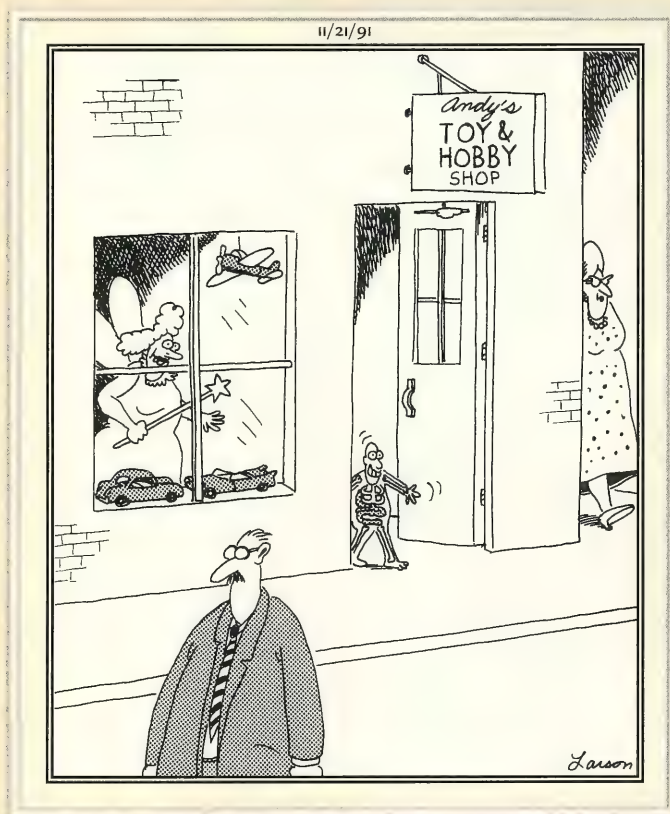
I hope this explanation helps. Thanks for taking the time to
write.

Sincerely,

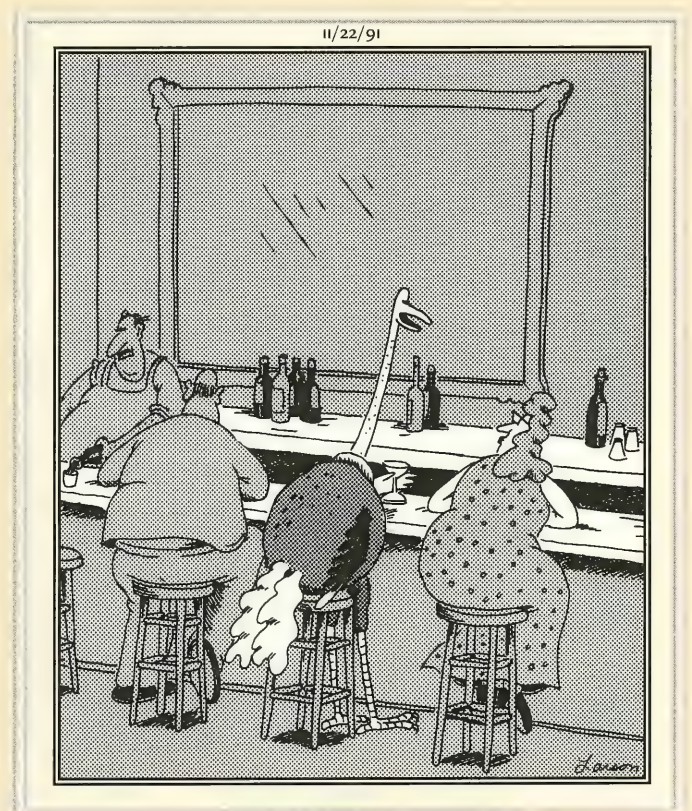
[Signature]
Jake Mortenson
Associate Editor



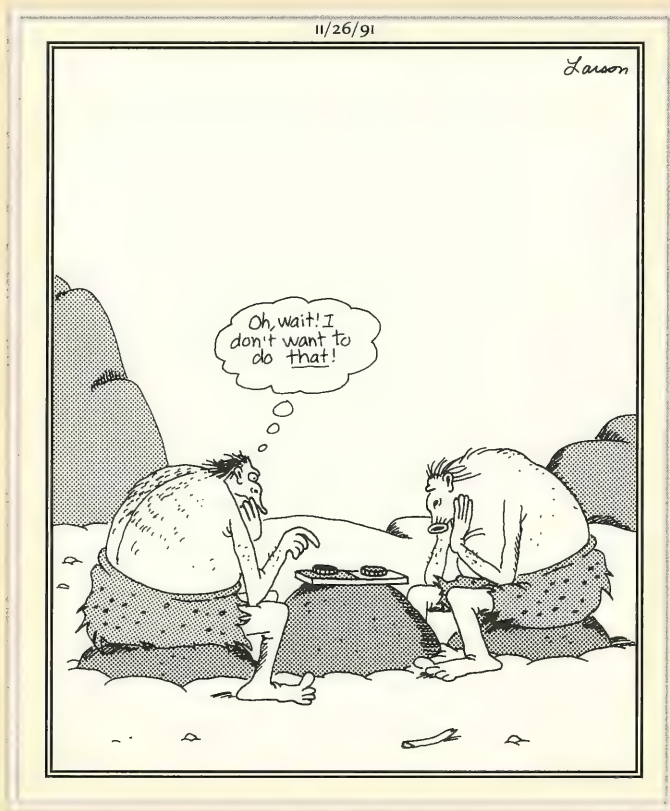
Giorgio Armani at home



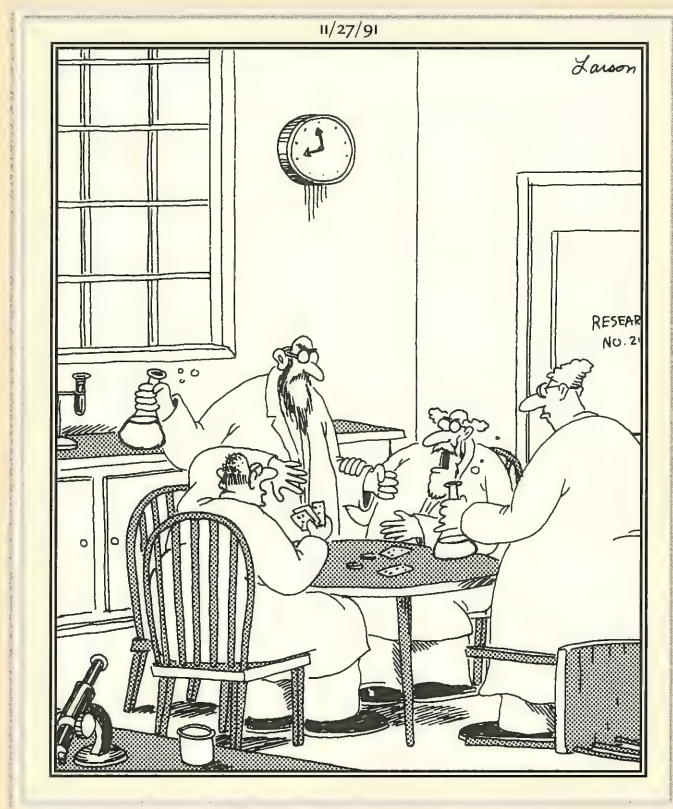
His wish to be a real person granted, the Visible Man takes his first steps into the real world—not suspecting that most people, upon seeing him, would either faint or throw up.



“Well, according to the dictionary, I’m just a large, flightless bird from East Africa. ... But believe me, Doris—once you get to know me, you’ll see I’m much, much more than that.”



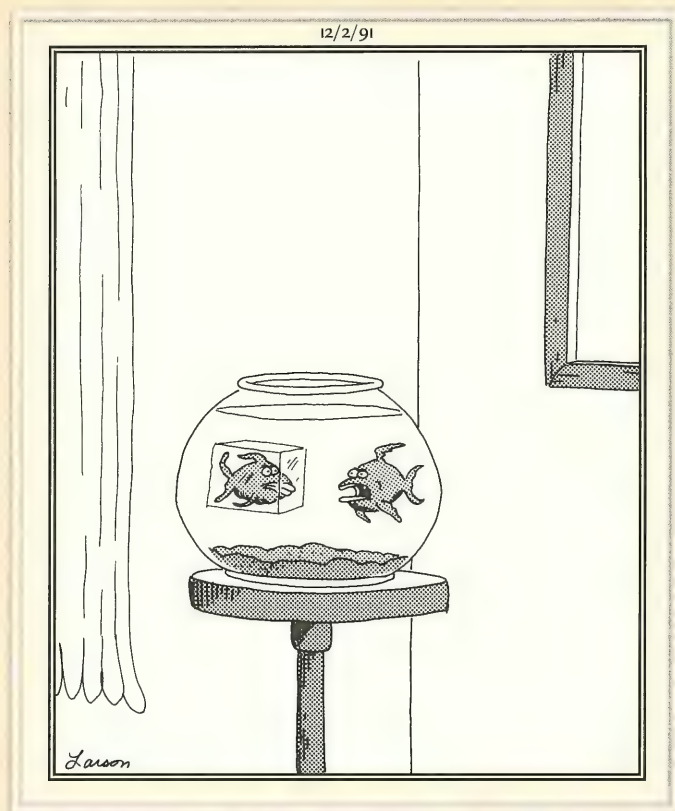
Early checkers



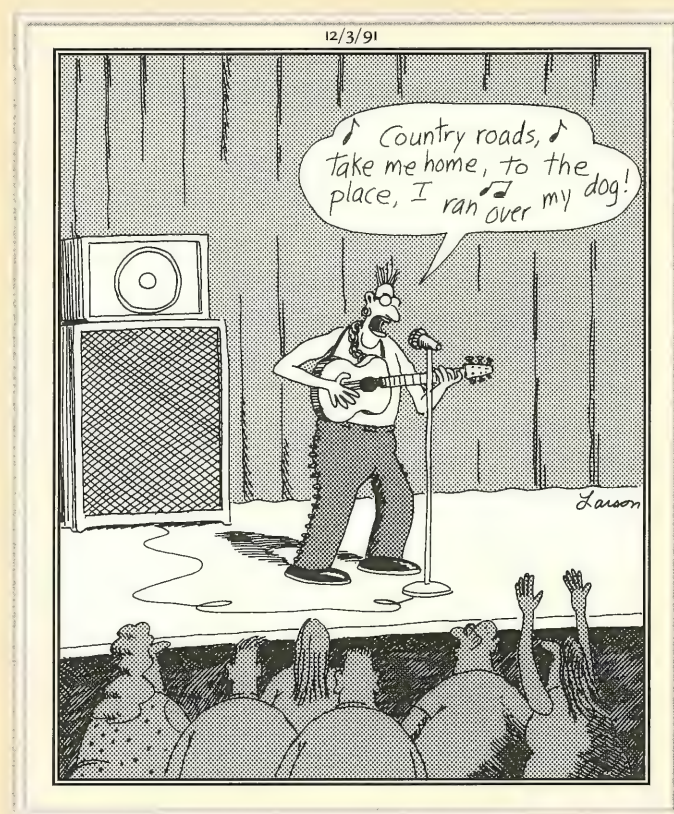
"Whoa! Whoa! C'mon, you guys! This is just a friendly game of cards—ease up on those acid-filled beakers."



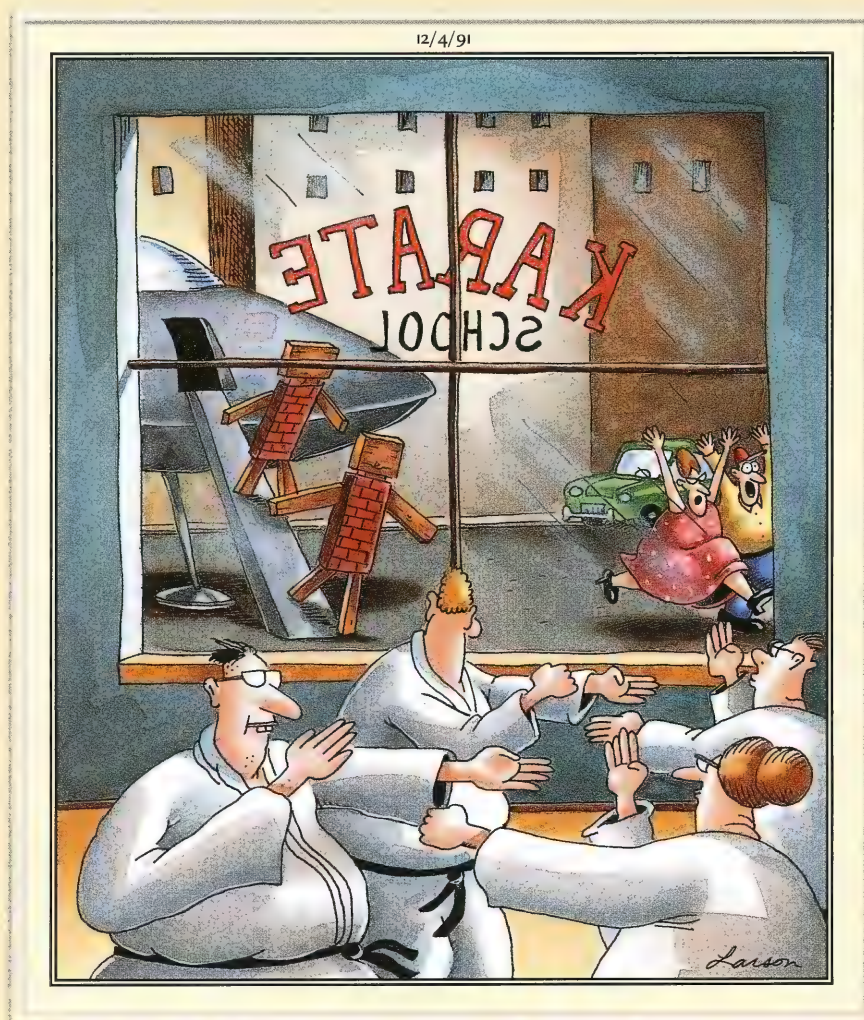
"Oh, yeah? Well, I'd rather be a living corpse made from dismembered body parts than a hunchbacked little grave robber like you!"



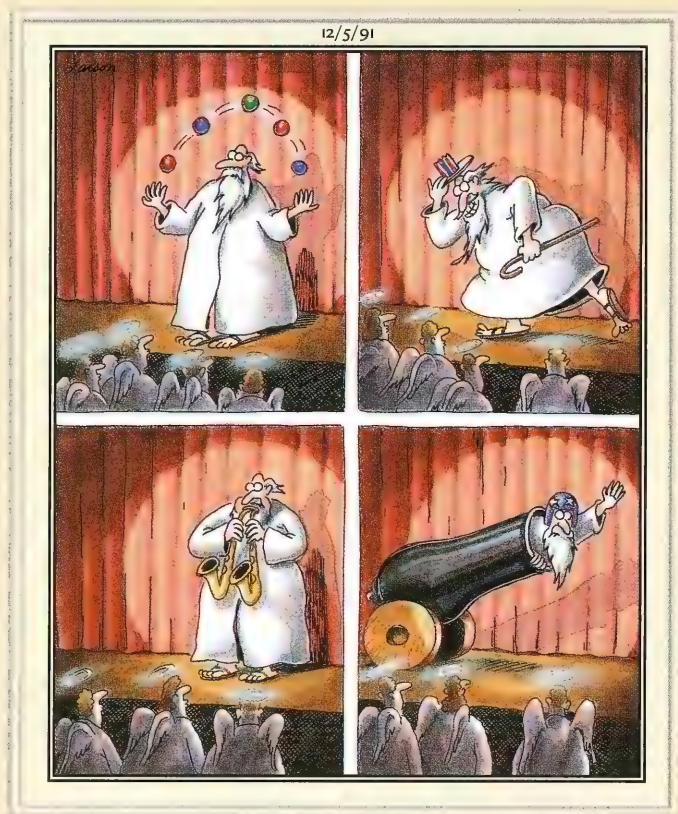
"You're a cold fish, Raymond."



John Denver on the comeback trail



The class abruptly stopped practicing. Here was a chance to not only employ their skills, but also to save the entire town.



Acts of God

August 23, 1994

Mr. Victor H. Hanson II
Birmingham, Alabama

Dear Sir:

The reason this letter is being sent directly to you instead of to "Reader's Opinions" is that I am not interested in seeing my letter or my name in the paper, but I am very greatly concerned with a deplorable situation which you can, if you will, very easily set right.

I do not believe that you are the sort of man who would mock God, or who would enjoy seeing others hold the Almighty up to ridicule—but the "Far Side" cartoon which appears daily in the BIRMINGHAM NEWS does just this on a recurring basis. Some time ago—perhaps two years ago—God was pictured in a series of cartoons entitled THE ACTS OF GOD, which appeared in a Sunday edition of the NEWS, as performing such acts as juggling and being shot out of a cannon, for the entertainment of the angels.

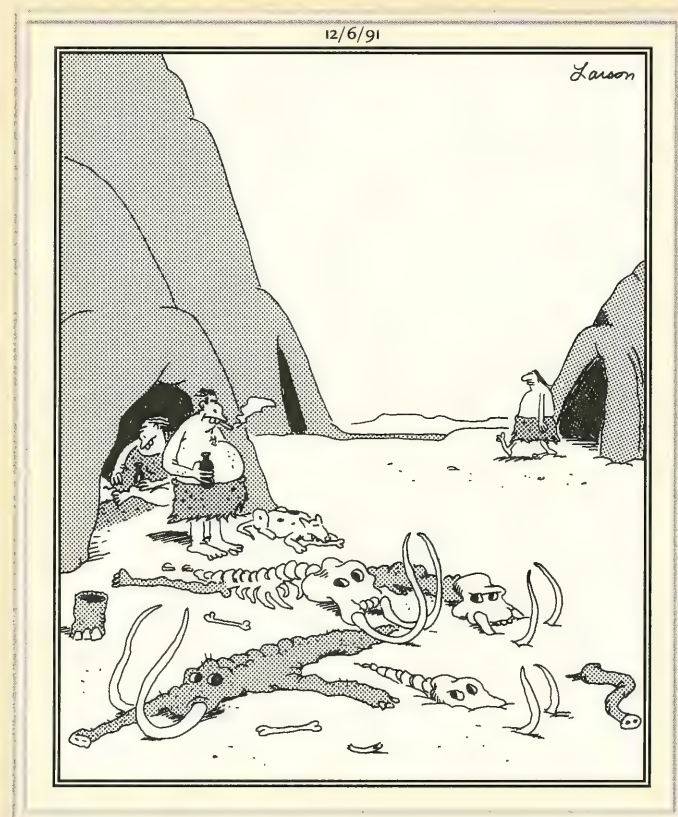
Less than a week ago—in last Friday's paper, I believe—He was ridiculed as an apparently clumsy creator who was delighted to find that snakes were quite easy to make using modeling clay.

It is not surprising that a warped mind would enjoy ridiculing Almighty God—what is surprising is to find a respectable family newspaper such as the BIRMINGHAM NEWS providing a platform for that warped mind.

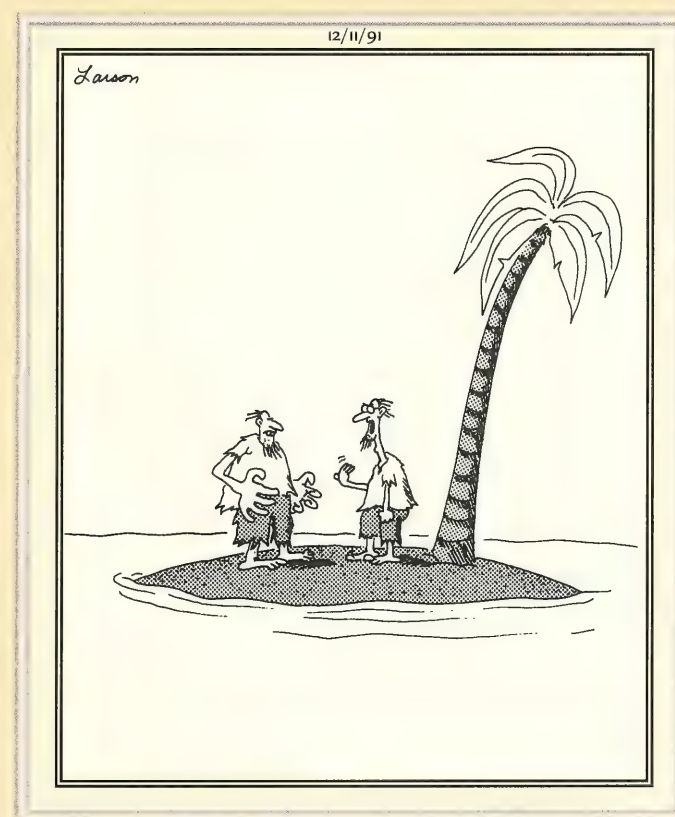
Surely, Mr. Hanson, you do not wish to make it appear that mocking God is an ordinary, respectable, acceptable thing to do, do you? Then will you not please cease to publish the "Far Side" cartoons in the NEWS?

Yours truly,

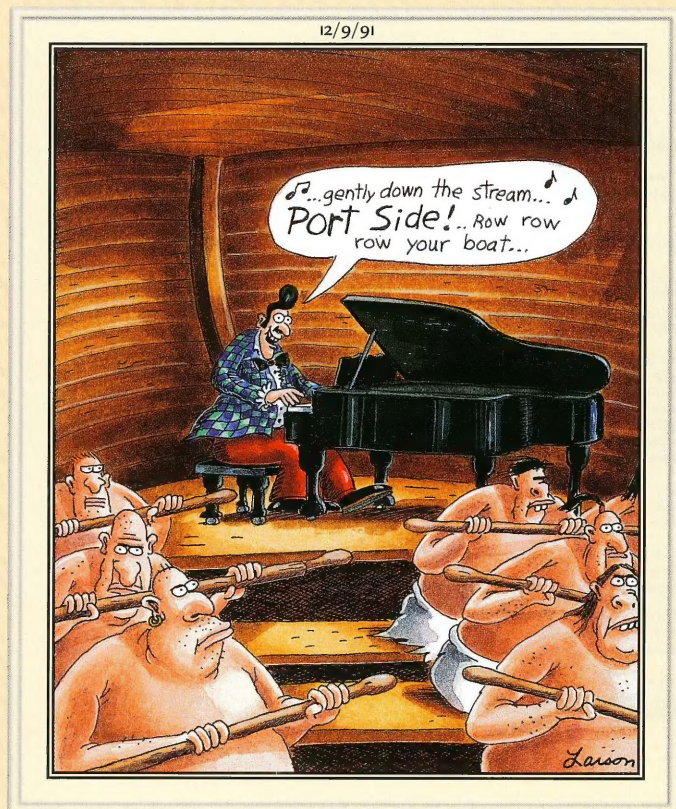
[Redacted signature]



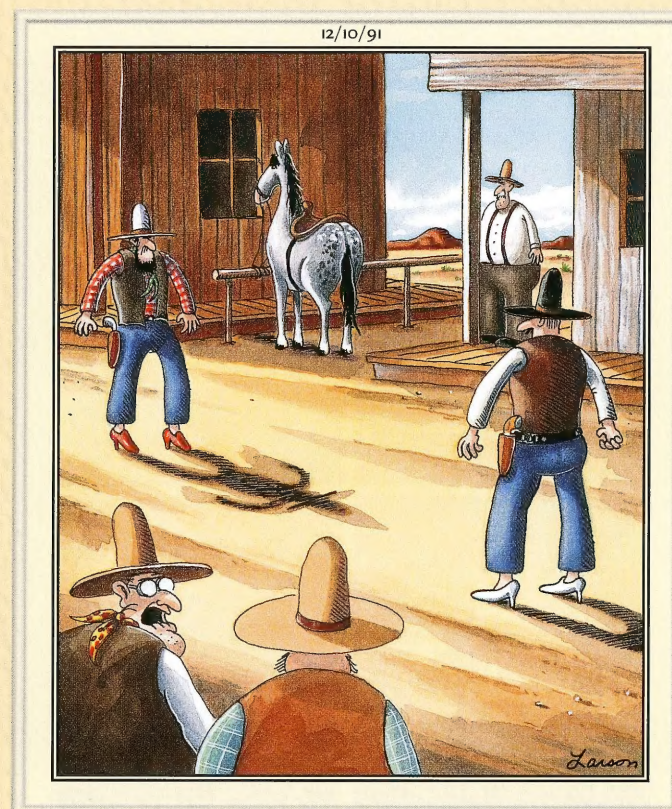
Of course, prehistoric neighborhoods always had that one family whose front yard was strewn with old mammoth remains.



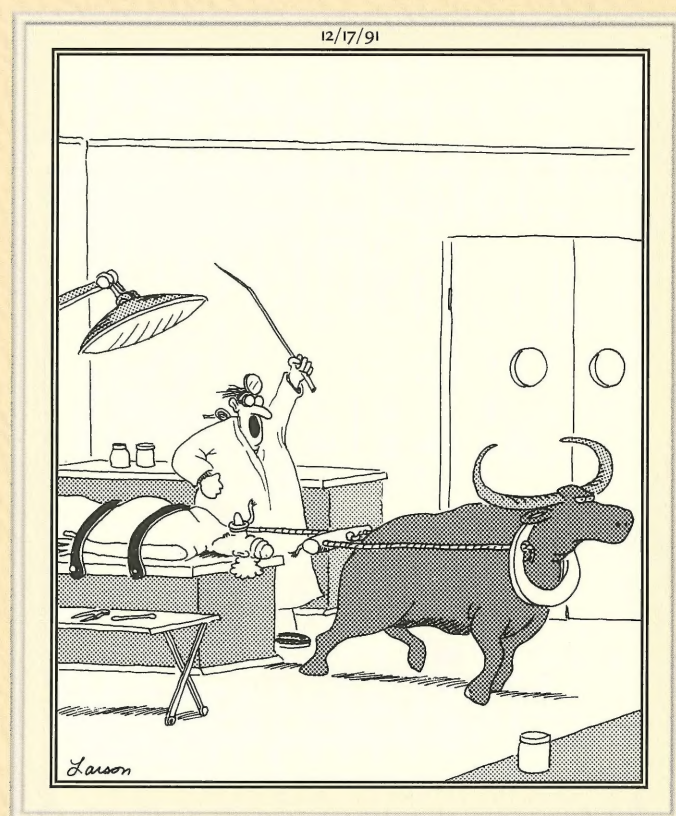
"Yeah, Vern! You heard what I said! And what are you gonna do about it? Huh? C'mon! What are ya gonna do? Huh? C'MON!"



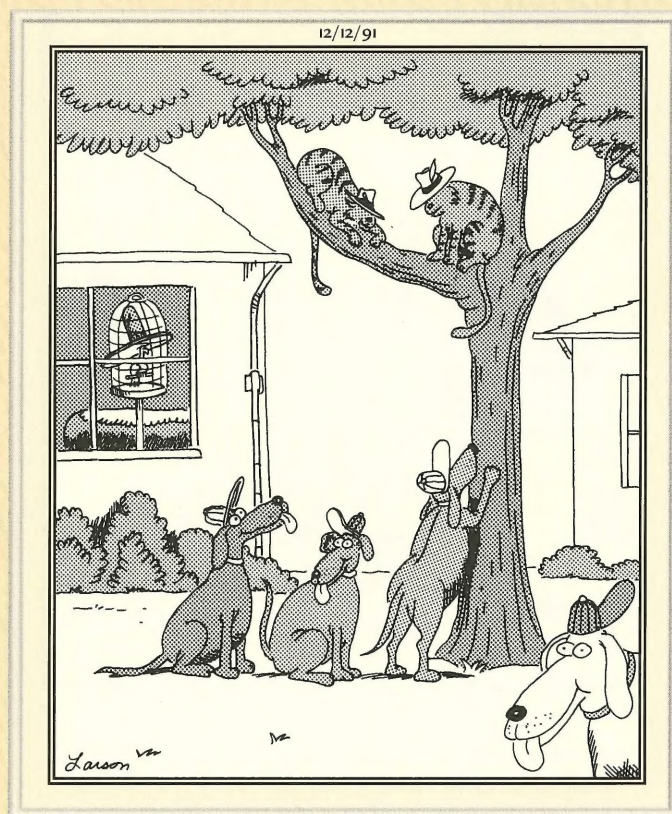
Slave-ship entertainers



"I tell ya, Ben—no matter who wins this thing, Boot Hill ain't ever gonna seem the same."

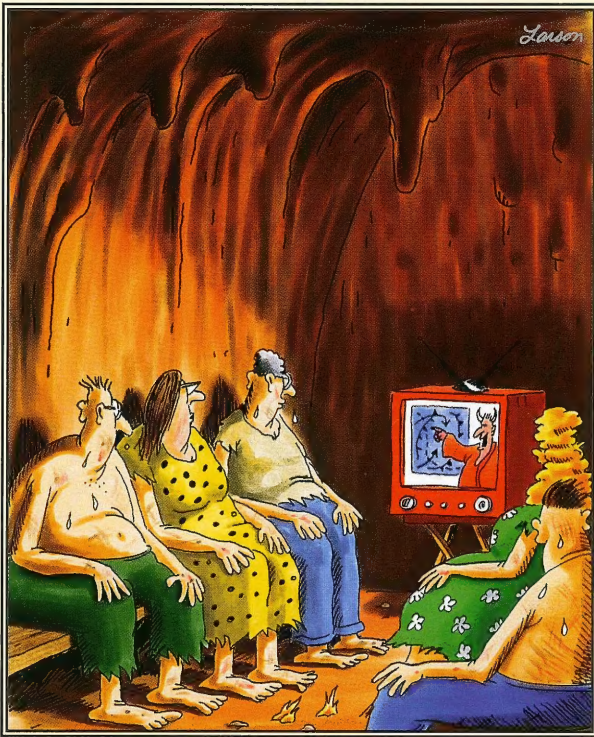


Until his medical license was suspended, cosmetic surgeon Dr. Irwin Blumenfeld left many of his patients with the tragic side effect known as "buffalo nose."



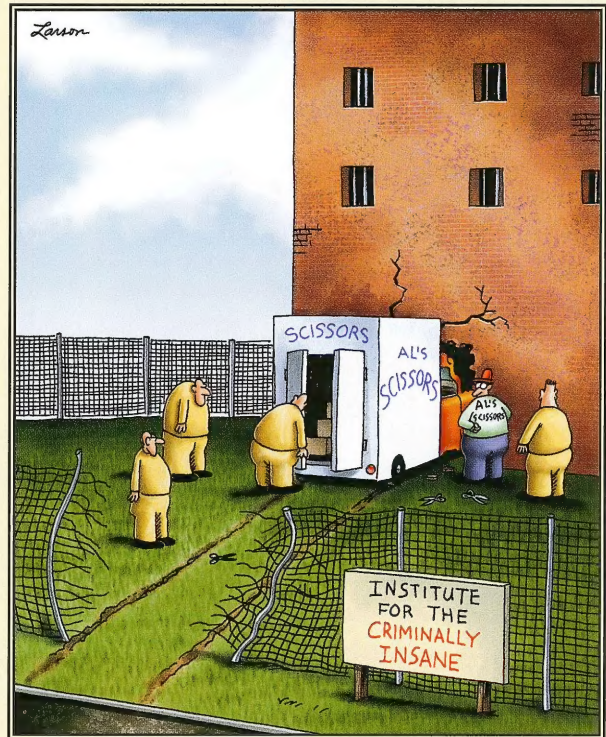
If pets wore hats: a study in animal personalities and styles

12/18/91



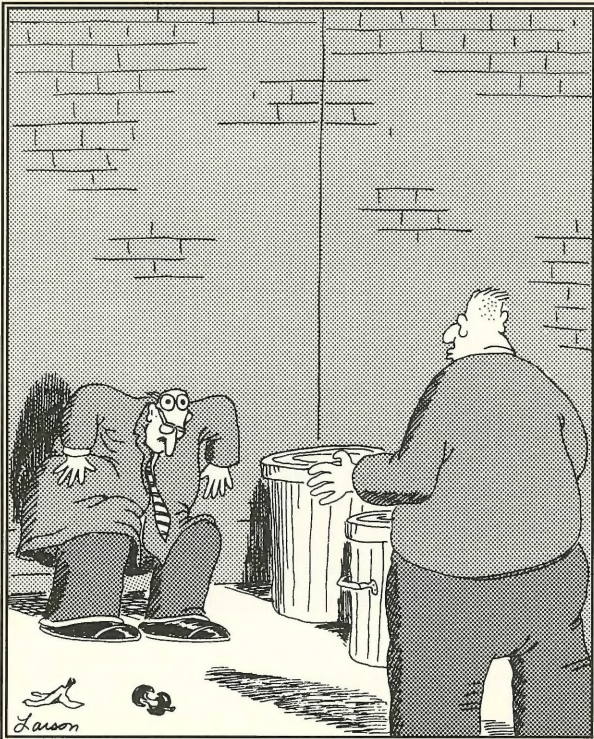
“And now the weather—well, doggone it, but I’m afraid that cold front I told you about yesterday is just baaarrrely going to miss us.”

12/13/91



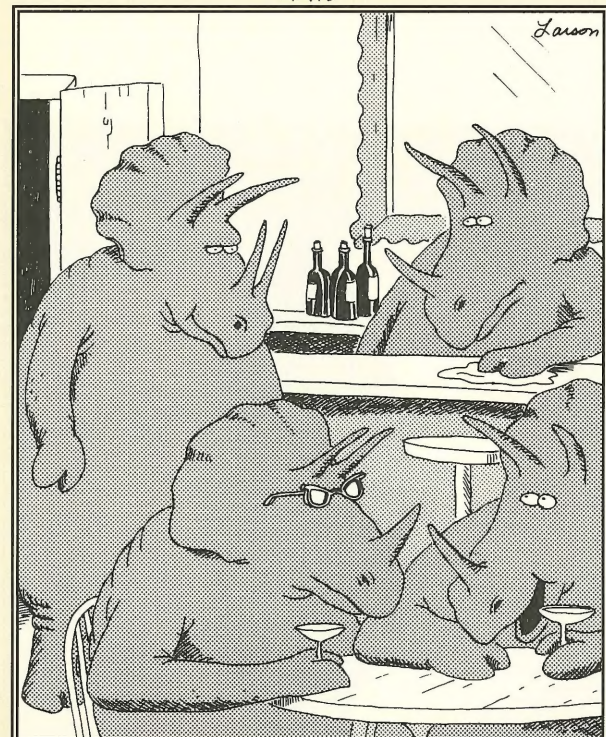
And then Al realized his problems were much bigger than just a smashed truck.

12/23/91

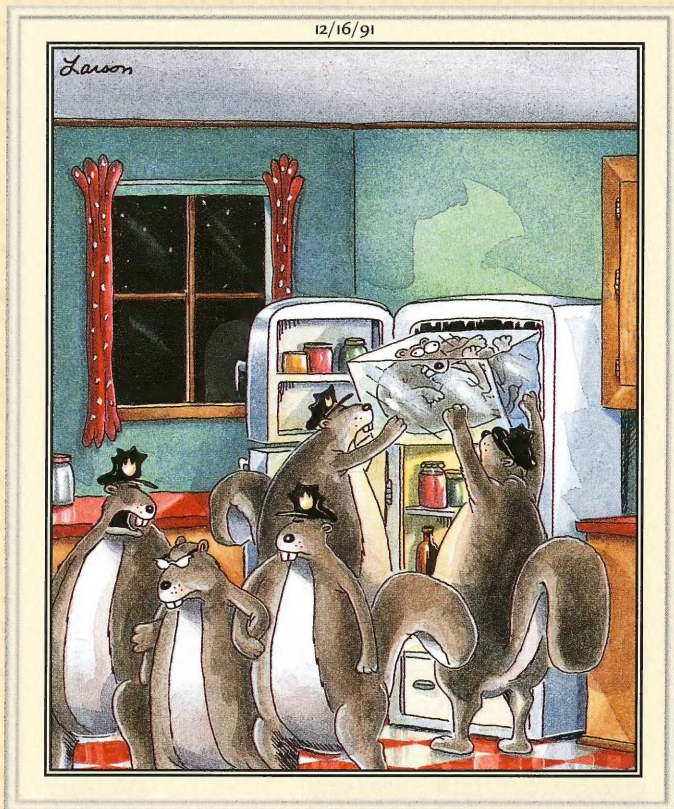


Cornered and sensing danger, Sidney flares his “eye spots.”

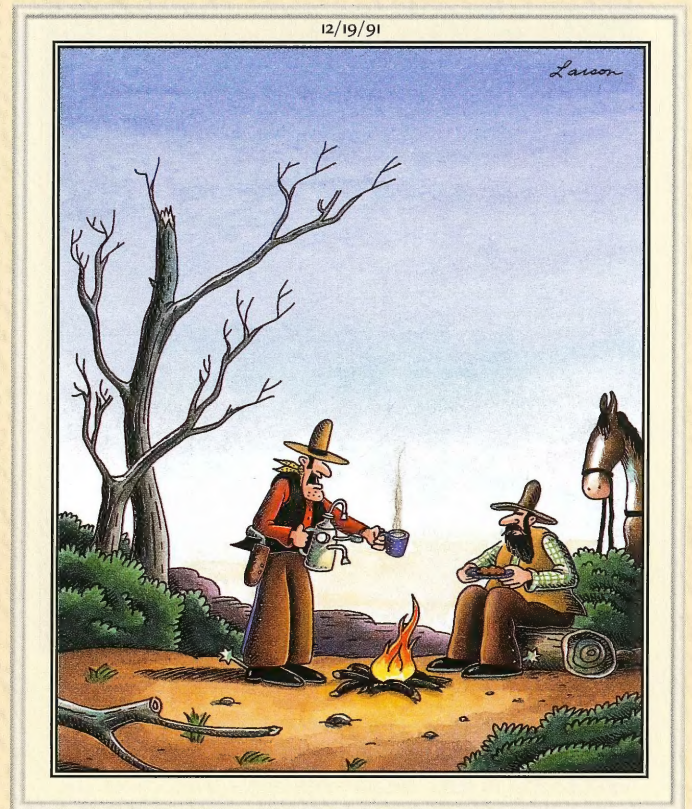
12/27/91



“Oooooo! Check it out, Edith! It’s a quadraceratops!”



"Come with us, ma'am—and if I were you, I'd get a good lawyer. No one's gonna buy that my-husband-was-only-hibernating story."



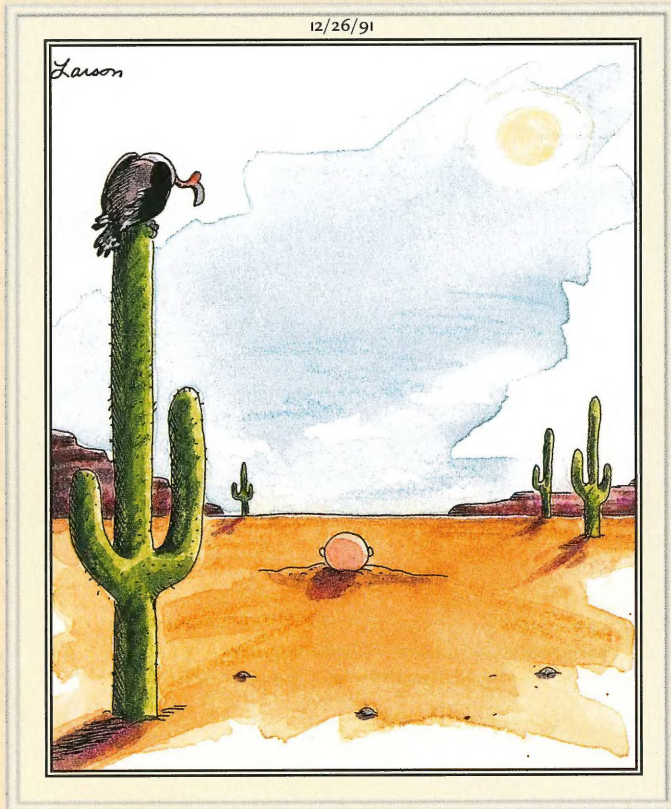
"Latte, Jed?"



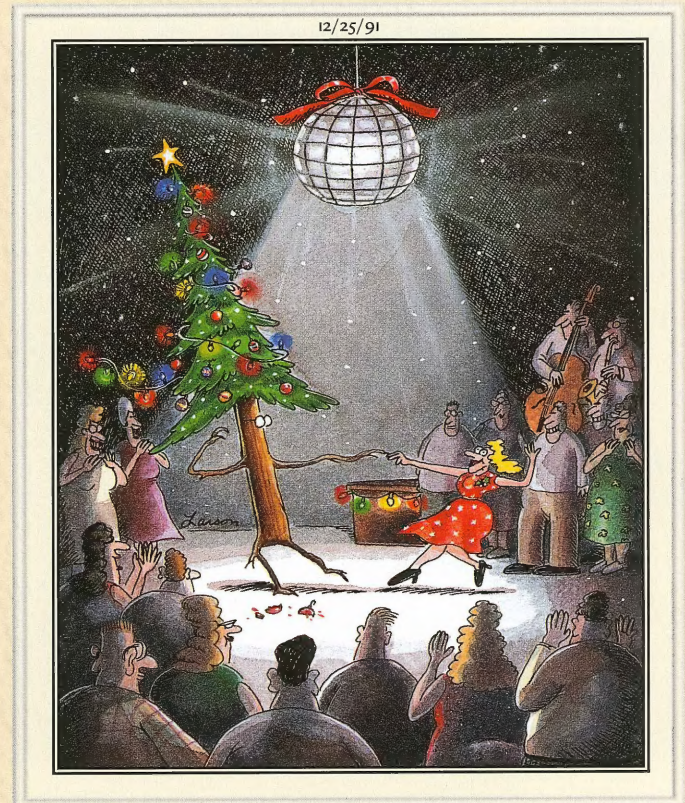
"My gun, Desmond! I sense this striped man-eater is somewhere dead ahead, waiting to ambush us! ... Ohhhhhh, he thinks he's so clever."



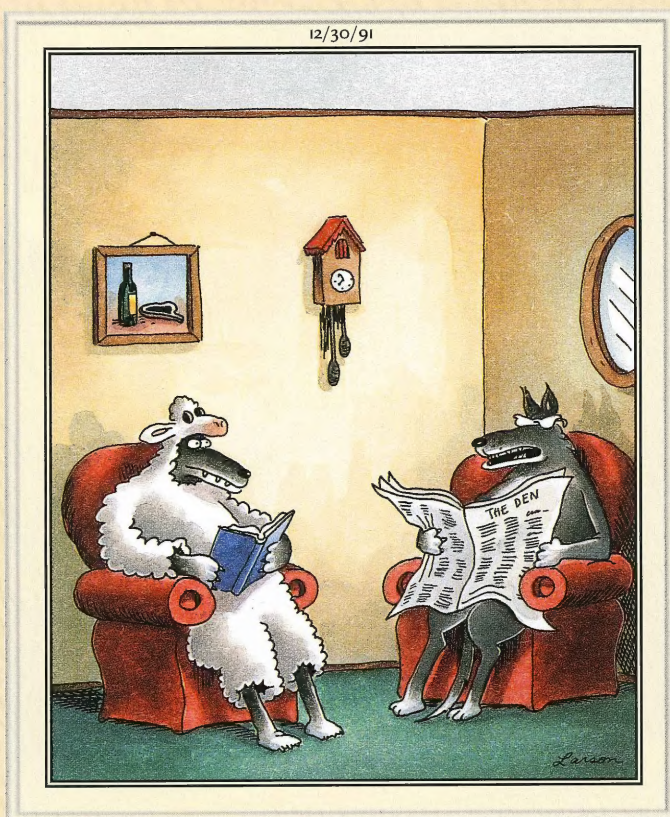
"Waiter! What's that soup doin' on my fly?"



Charlie Brown in Indian country



Carl had never had so much fun in his whole life, and he knew, from this moment on, that he would never again be a lone pine tree.



"I'm starting to worry about you, Earl. ... Stalking sheep in that outfit is one thing, but wearing it around the house is just a little bit kinky."

